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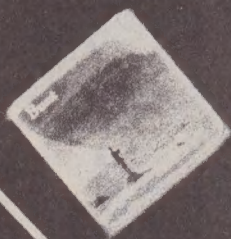
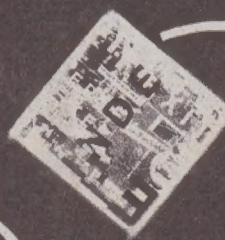
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From The Editor's Desk: Everything I Know, I Learned From Star Trek, Part 2

Since I love to quote Mark Twain, let me start off by saying that rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated.

Well, okay, not demise, exactly. But an awful lot of well-meaning people have been inquiring about my health lately. Just for the record, I'd like to thank them all and let everyone know that I'm doing just fine.

This all started last issue, when my opening editorial talked about a bout of depression and anxiety attacks that laid me out after I learned that I was going to be losing my day job. I talked a little about what that experience was like, and what I did about it (which was to go to my doctor and get some medication.) The pills got me through the crisis, and luckily, my job situation righted itself without too much stress and turmoil, and I am once again gainfully (and even somewhat happily) employed. The medication (I started out on Xanax for the anxiety attacks, and then moved on to something called Serzone for the depression) got me through the worst of it, and I am happy to report that I am now completely off the pills and back to my old neurotic, stressed-out, but unmedicated self.

Something else I talked about last issue dealt with how society treats any sort of mental disorder as some sort of shameful secret that has to be hidden from everyone else, which I thought was ridiculous. The statistics on how many Americans suffer from stress, anxiety, and depression are astronomical, and to treat these problems as some sort of guilty secret is just plain silly. At least, that's the way I felt, and I said so, and laid my problems out so people would know what I was going through.

That editorial turned out to be one of the most important things I have ever written, at least in terms of the response it engendered. First, I was touched and flattered by the support I received from so many friends and acquaintances, even from total strangers who read the editorial and wanted to wish me well. But more importantly was the response from other people with similar problems who suddenly felt unburdened and wanted to share their own stories with me. I heard from people who take medication, who go to therapy, who have been through 12-step rehab programs; friends with wives or lovers or parents with drug and alcohol dependencies; people who suffer from anxiety attacks and agoraphobia and all sorts of stress-related problems. And you know what? None of them is *crazy* or *unbalanced* or *sick*, they're just people with problems who are dealing with them. And a lot of them were friends of mine who had kept these things hidden for years.

So if you were worried about me, thank you so much, and I'm happy to report that things are fine. And I'll continue to worry about you too. And if you're reading this for the first time, and you've been going through some tough times yourself, just remember that you're not alone. We're all in this together, and it's all just part of life. And it's going to get better.

Live long & prosper.

- Jim Testa, August 1999

Jersey Beat

Summer/Fall 1999 Issue #65

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Editor & Publisher

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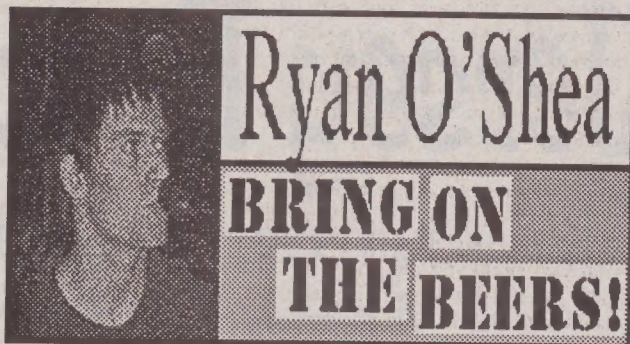
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Will we review your release if you send it to us? The most honest answer to this frequently asked question is: Maybe. We do our best to listen to everything that is sent to us, but due to the enormous volume of mail we receive, it's simply impossible to review all of it. We can't guarantee a review, and if that's a problem, send your next release to The Big Takeover or Hit List and see what they do with it. Thank you.

- the Management



Show and Tour Diary Entry - The Nudie Bar Tour.

Naked Show Number One - Jiggles Tavern

We just played here at one of the local naked bars here in town to kick off our ridiculous four-show tour of naked bars. Tonight was one of the weirdest fuckin' experiences in my entire life. James got us a gig because one of the girls he pals around with works here, a girl which we all know somewhat (and I won't say her name, because now I've seen her boobs.) It was rather odd, she was dancing around us while we played our set, it was something out of a movie or a music video by Motley Crue. It was *weird*. I mean, here I am, playing my guitar, and this girl we all know is shaking her fucking boobs in my face. Guys are coming up and slipping dollar bills to her, and I mean, Jesus, it was scary. You should have seen James though, his eyes were planted on the ass's across the room. If I wasn't such a goon I would say James played his bass with the big fuckin' boner he had watching the girls waving at him.

Jason, on the other hand, was in kind of the same boat as me - like, "what the fuck is going on here"? Steve was playing drums and when a song would stop, he'd stop for a second and say something like, "Oh, that's rad, Ry, check out her hair" and break into the next tune. It was really a weird show. Nobody was there to see us play, they were all there to see the hot naked ladies. One of us got a free lap dance too. At one point, James' bass strap fell off and he sat down and that girl was rubbing her rear end in his lap; at that point I couldn't even sing I was laughing so hard. Jason was just shooting me looks, like, 'this is lame, let's leave.' Anyway, after our set we all got free Jiggles t-shirts and 40 bucks. So here I am outside the club as we speak, trying to avoid any contact with the rest of the band because I don't wanna load stuff in the van. I hate doing that, so I am hiding out.

We all made a bet last night before the show that who ever jerked off first after the show owed the guy who didn't five bucks. So if I don't wanker it right away after being in the presence of real naked ladies, like the rest of the gang will, I could get 15 bucks!

Naked Bar Show # 2 - Blue Velvet Theater

Unfortunately, I had diarrhea all day and I wasn't feeling so great during tonight's show here at the Blue Velvet Theater. We played a short set tonight, because I could not stop shitting. Right before the set, I made sure to shit as much as possible so I wouldn't have to go while in the midst of playing. As I soon learned, whiskey sours do not help relieve diarrhea. We played ten songs, and I was fucking out of there. I was too scared to use the bathrooms inside so I had stolen a roll of toilet paper and had been shitting out back in this vacant lot while Jason Irritation kept a look out. He kept saying, "what does your stomach tell you about tomorrow's gig"? I said, "I got a feeling it won't be as shitty as this one". It was pretty lame.

Since I spent most of my time outside behind a little hill of dirt in an empty lot, I didn't really get a good look at what the club was like other than the bar. I just turned 21 so I had to get a couple drinks, which I think I already mentioned made the circumstances with my bottom side worsen. Oddly enough, I didn't see any of the naked girls dancing tonight. Wait, no, I did catch one pair of knockers out the corner of my eye. I mean they were everywhere.

Show Number Three - Silver Dollar

Tonight's show began with the owner telling us he didn't do live shows, and that he didn't book us to play at his club. Then after letting us get all pissed off and bummed out, he tells us he's "just joking". So we set up our shit and kick of our set with "Suzy Caught Me Staring At Her Tits," a song I wrote years ago and had never played live until that show. I figured it fit tonight's theme. The set started out pretty good up until the third song, then it was all downhill. We got a little too hammered on the drinking, I suppose. That's what we said anyway, to all the people booing us sitting at the bar. I'll admit, we are a band who ain't any good live. In fact we suck. But the tunes are pretty decent, so it makes up for it, but not at a titty bar filled with cowboys. I mean we had all sorts of scary logger types breathing down our necks. I couldn't wait to get out of there.

Some guy said to me after the show "you kids are no good, that Marilyn Manson stuff ain't music". Whatever.

Show Number Four - S&M Party!

The last and final show of this pathetic mini titty tour wasn't at a actual titty bar this time, instead it was at an S&M party. I've never been to an S&M party so I figured since I've seen S&M in porno mags, there was bound to be boobs there so it was good enough to include on the tour. We showed up around nine or so, and started unpacking our shit. At first I was a bit nervous, I thought that it was going to be all these freaky people off in corners with whips and chains and bondage gear having an all night orgy. But it wasn't at all, well, maybe, but instead it was a bunch of gothic kids crowed together in a dark basement.

We dragged our stuff downstairs through crowds of people looking like Robert Smith (of the Cure) to Marilyn Manson. In fact before we played I had a chance to talk to some of them. I met one girl who took me into her room and we talked about the Cure. So it was a friendlier atmosphere. Anyway we went on and talked a bunch of shit about fucking and whatnot because we figured they'd all be like "yeah cool fucking", but instead they stood around with these puzzled looks on there faces. I was like "this is an S&M party, isn't it"? They all screamed and yelled so I was like "Then all I wanna do is fuck" and we kicked into an old tune called "I Wanna Fuck". Lucky for us that got em going. Or else we would have looked really stupid.

Anyway the kids really got into it, which made it lots of fun. They all slammed around the dark crowded basement while we played. One freaky fucked up chick threw her blood at us, and we all hit the deck. It was funny cause Irritation was like "Ahhh, AIDS" and dove behind Steve our drummer. I guess there was a broken bottle on the ground and kids where falling down and getting cuts. Oops.

So as our set continued into the night, we took a break and did some talking with the crowd, we told 'em how we were perverts and we've been playing at nudie bars for the past three days, and how we wanted to see some naked people before we played anymore. Big mistake, cause the crowd was drunk enough that half of 'em got naked or took off their shirts and started going fucking nuts before even a note rang out on Irritation's guitar. They were already dancing around. So we decided that since the goth kids where all right, we'd play our Forgotten Rebels cover but change it to "The Goths are All Right" and played that for 'em. We did, they loved it and that was that. The only other thing that happened was James disappeared with some chunky broad to smoke pot, so we were left behind in this basement with half naked people talking to us about how rad we where. Steve was even signing some boobs.

For free stickers or buttons or whatever of the band The Offs that you just read about, write to us at The Offs, 561 W. 40th Eugene OR 97405, or visit our web site <http://talk.to/TheOffs> to get more info. Oh yeah, you can read about us on the Jersey Beat webpage too, go to "Potheds, Punk and Pacific Northwest."

"An alibi for all the moments we are filled with motiveless despair"

Either you're mad at missing the Joan of Arc show or you're mad at me because you've got a crush on me. So what if I forgot to guest list you? Another rock show. Another teary emo girl staring at some sad boy singing some sad songs. Smog in the air. Don't forget your glasses. "Every time you speak, my attention slips away."

Sipping drinks. Every fucking time I go out with Brodie, it's the same old shit. Why I still hang out with this kid is beyond me. Picking me up in his brand new '98 sports car with CD player and one of those "can someone say annoying" car alarms. Doot doot. Doot doot my ass. The only thing I hate more than those stupid car alarms are guys who feel the need to own pick-up trucks. It always amazes me that the strangest, ugliest motherfuckers drive pick-up trucks. And for some unknown reason there's like this unspoken rule of thumb that says the bigger your pickup truck the bigger your dick. Oh yeah, sure. Duh! Can we say turn on girls? Didn't think so. So that brings me back to my good pal Brodie, who happens to contain a fraction of asshole-free parts to him. You know, like spitting out comments that make quote boards like, "I'm too drunk to play guitar so I think I'm just gonna drive home" or the ever popular, "I think I'm going to wake up early tomorrow. Yeah, like noon." So, umm...yeah, we arrive at the venue. There's a bunch of punk rock meets spock-rocker kids lined up all along the street corner. So what does Brodie do? Valet parking, but of course. And seeing as he just turned 21, his entrance wouldn't be complete without an immediate visit to the bar. While ordering drinks, I could here kids arguing about Jets to Brazil not sounding enough like Jawbreaker. Stirred my rum and coke to Brodie explaining that it's officially become cool again to admit you like Green Day.

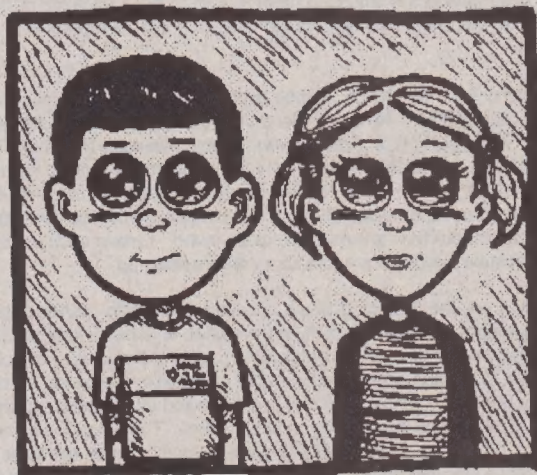
We made our way inside. Fully prepared to be rocked. Zine dorks up front. Muddle pins on their sweaters. Swarm through the crowd. Headed toward the VIP room upstairs. Schmooze it up while you still can. Amps turned all the way up. Volume? Yes please. Ear plugs? Hell no! We park ourselves in front row of the balcony. Sticky carpeting. Keep thinking I stepped in gum. Label folk all around. Bullshit introductions and even worse business card exchanges. Brodie's so impressed I've got a business card. Says that's "punk rock." I told him that having no health insurance and hospital bills from losing my hearing isn't so punk rock. Mid-set, kids are still arguing over old school versus new school. Brodie thinks all the fucking old school kids should just fight all the new school kids. But not fist fight. They should all get together for a weekend full of Double Dare. Yup, physical challenges and all. But this time around, all the questions are related to punk rock. Some old school questions about Misfits, Circle Jerks, Social D, etc. While new school questions about Deep Elm being a front for an investment firm, what ever happened to Doc Hopper, and why Dischord hasn't released a good record in god knows how long. Then, whoever wins, well, it's settled then. The kids can quit whining. If old school punkers win, then they can bring back circle pits and spikes. If

new school lads win, they can ban silly bag checks at big venues when everyone very well knows that no emo boy or girl is gonna be bringing their gat or switchblade in to the Sunny Day Real Estate show. Just think of all those embarrassing moments you've suffered. You know what I'm talking about. Being on line and getting your bag emptied with that super cute boy/girl next in line behind you. And he/she is witness to all the stupid crap you just can't leave home without. Comb, hair-gel, diary, muddle's pathetic teen mag issue, expensive camera (with Mineral and Atari stickers on the side), along with Cometbus and cell phone in the front pouch. Oh, good thing you put your lip balm in your pocket. Cheese factor. But then again, cheese equals cool if you're indie rock.

Brodie decides it's time to leave even though the band is still playing. I try and stall him by walking a little slower but he's pressing the need to meet girls whose favorite shows are Friends and Melrose Place. Don't ask. Walking out, we passed what seemed to be a public debate on whether or not it's punk for bands to play encores. Hmm...perhaps we should inform the punk rock police.

We're heading home. My lips are stiff. Thinking about everything and nothing that just happened. Every distance in between the things I've just seen, heard, or said. Why I'm analyzing this shit is beyond me. Just another rock show.

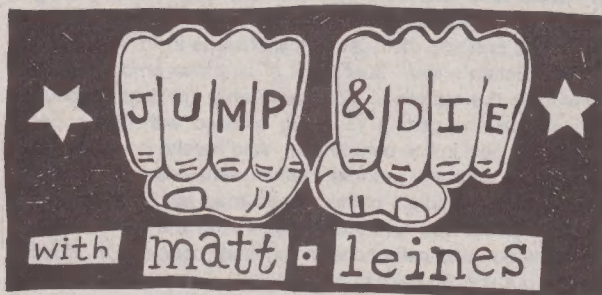
Be
My
Head



by david brown

The car pulls up to my apartment and Brodie looks over and asks, "Either you're mad at missing the Joan of Arc show or you're mad at me because you've got a crush on me. Which is it?" "What the fuck", I reply. He throws a five at me and says "there's your guest list." Crazy night. I start to walk away, turn around, and ask, "what time you picking me up tomorrow?"

David Brown resides in San Diego, CA where he operates a self-started independent publicity company, Holiday Matinee (www.holidaymatinee.com). He is also co-editor of Muddle Magazine (www.muddle.com). Send him some comments: dave@muddle.com



One of my absolute favorite things to do is go to a show. You have to agree that there is no better feeling than going to see that new favorite band of yours. The band whose new record you listen to religiously. The band whose poster is on your wall. The band whose first 7-inch you're willing to pay some large sum of money for at auction. The band that is finally coming to your hometown to play a show.

Sounds good so far, doesn't it? But then you realize, "Wait, am I going to be able to enjoy myself at this 'show of all shows'? Am I going to be able to stand right up front and sing along and throw my fist in the air in time with the chorus? Or is some idiotic, selfish, 'dancer' going to land on my head during his feeble attempt to be cool and call it 'crowd surfing' and 'stage diving'?" Hate to break it to you kid, but the chance of you having an uninterrupted spiritual moment at this "show of all shows" (or for that matter even having a really good time) is slim to none because of these foolish kids that think that defying the laws of gravity is the epitome of a "good time."

I go to school in Providence, Rhode Island. When the Bouncing Souls and Anti-Flag played, I went. My friend Jack and his girlfriend Becky went with me. All is going fine, Anti-Flag are playing awesome, but then I look around and Jack and Becky, who were right next to me, are no where to be seen. "Oh well," I think, "I'll find them after the set." So Anti-Flag finish and I squeeze myself through the over-crowded club looking for either of them, but they are nowhere to be found. I move back up to the stage, because the Souls are just about done setting up.

I wanted to see the Bouncing Souls. Instead, I saw little flashes of them behind a wall of people. There must have been at least 25 kids on stage during their set; singing along, stage diving, looking like idiots. First off, if you are not in the band, a roadie, or invited on stage by the band, you don't have any right to be there. Second, unless invited by the band, you have no right to sing along into a mike on stage either. The other one hundred people at the show paid money to see the Bouncing Souls, not some kid named Steve sing two entire verses of "Lamar Vanoy." Mind you, this was weeks before their new album was out and they played a lot of new material. There were kids going on stage to sing along during these new songs and they obviously didn't know the words. So basically they would stand there like idiots, realize they had no clue what was going on, then they would proceed to stage dive, while you got kicked in the head with their shoe.

Let me tell you, I had the best fucking time. That was sarcasm. It is really sad to know that the crowd at a show can be the deciding factor between an amazing show and the "Hell Night" you thought would never end.

So "Hell Night" is over - none too soon either, I might add - and I again try to find Jack and Becky. The club empties out, but they are still nowhere to be found. They aren't inside or outside. They aren't anywhere. So I walk back to my school by myself. The next day I find out that Jack spent five hours at the hospital the night before and got four stitches above his eyebrow, because he got kicked in the head during Anti-Flag's set. Let me tell you, he had the best fucking time. Again, that was sarcasm. It is disgusting to think that the crowd at a show can be the deciding factor between an amazing show and having to leave half way through due to medical emergencies.

Since I started going to shows, I knew there was something I didn't like about crowd surfing and stage diving. Years later, I began to understand

how ritualistic it really was. I'm sure when the first person to stage dive did it, it was probably really expressive. I'll even say the second, third, and fourth divers were doing something new and passionate. But after that, all of the passion became homogenized, as something that was predictable and expected. Stage diving and crowd surfing became the publicized "statement" of teen angst and at the same time, became a great music video cliché... if ya' smell the "teen spirit" that the Rock is cookin'.

So there is some kid crowd surfing during the show that you've waited weeks and weeks to see, and paid upwards of \$12 for, and he's ruining the show for you? Here are some helpful tips so you too can take a stand against stage diving and crowd surfing.

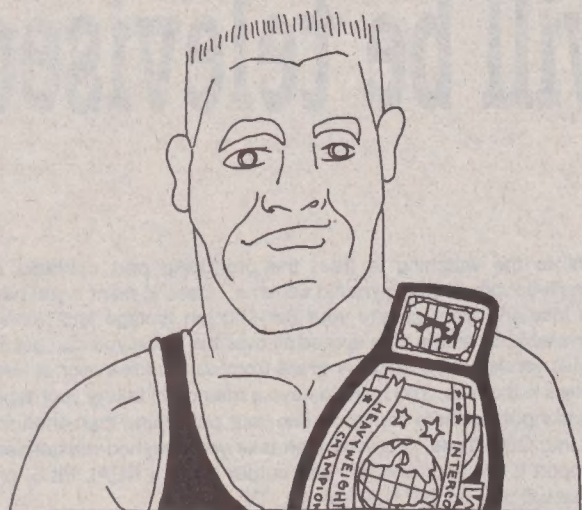
- 1) Don't let the kid get in the air in the first place. If you are near someone that is about to boost someone else up, put your arms out or press down on the potential surfer's shoulders.
- 1) If the kid gets in the air, and makes it to the stage, don't let him/her jump. Put your arms in the air as a barricade, and when they go to jump forward push back against them and say, "No!" Or if you are a badass you can say, "No! Fuck You!" whichever suits you.
- 1) This one is my favorite and I think it really works. If a kid is crowd surfing, pull off his shoe or hat. Either throw it somewhere (be careful not to hit anyone, as that would defeat the purpose) or just make a collection on the side of the stage. If they are missing a shoe, it is one less hard surface that can hit one's head. Also they might stop altogether and start searching for their shoe/hat instead.



Hopefully, these tips will help you enjoy the show, and maybe even convince people to stop crowd surfing and stage diving, so that every show can be enjoyable. And for those of you reading that do indulge in crowd surfing and stage diving, go ahead and yell "sour grapes" all you want, but while you were trying to find your shoe I was buying the last one they had of that T-shirt you really wanted.

Below is the logo for PASDACS (Punks Against Stage Diving and Crowd Surfing). If you'd prefer, the "P" could also stand for "People." "O" is for "other," "P" is for "people," the last "P," well, that's not that...funny is it? Oh well. If you put on shows, if you are in a band, or if you do something else, and are also of the anti-crowd surfing persuasion, feel free to include the logo on your flyers, in your zine, etc. And if after thirty days you are unsatisfied, you can keep the memories as our gift to you. What the hell, if you'd like to register as an official member, maybe I'll make up some nifty membership cards or something.

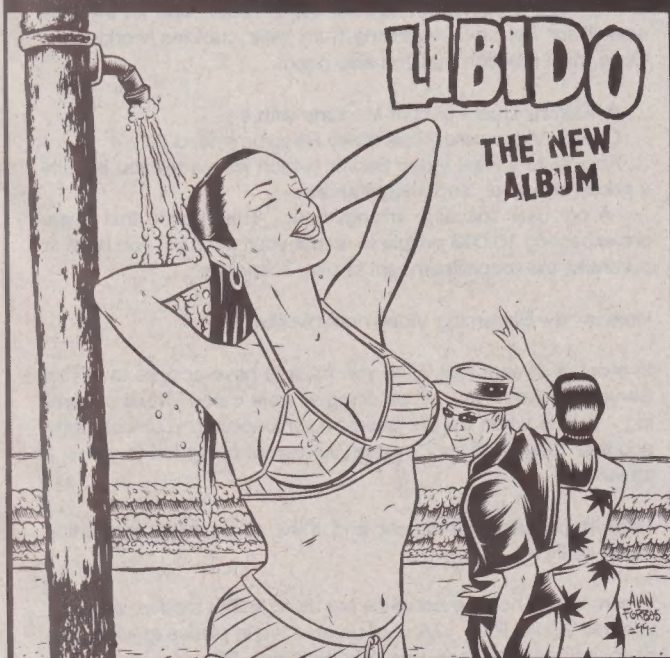
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Parachute Pants

NJ's indie Scene Revisits The 80's

Anyone who orders a record from NJ's Childlike Records these days is getting a nice surprise - a free bonus compilation CD called Parachute Pants that features some of the Garden State's best unsigned bands doing their favorite cheesy songs from the Eighties. From Evelyn Forever's popped-up version of the

Parachute Pants



Replacements' "Little Mascara" to the Boss Jim Gettys' garagey rave-up of the Dickies' "Gigantor," the album's a non-stop treat. In fact, we thought the whole project was such a good idea that we decided to talk to Childlike Records' Mike Doktorski and ask how it all came together. - Jim Testa

Q: Who came up with the idea originally?

Mike: Mike Iurato (Childlike Records' CEO). To be honest, Chris Martine and I weren't totally crazy about the idea initially, but we really started getting excited when the songs started coming in and they were all so well done.

2. Were the bands you approached given a band/song, or were they allowed to come up with their own ideas?

Mike: They all came up with the songs on their own. We got a real wide variety of stuff too. A lot of the bands did songs we totally weren't expecting from them which made it sort of interesting. The bands all recorded and produced the songs on their own.

3. Was licensing the songs a problem, or did you simply ignore the publishing question since you were doing such a limited pressing?

Mike: Since *Parachute Pants* is being distributed "for promotional purposes only," i.e. for free, we didn't bother with any of the licensing. Technically, I guess it's a bit illegal, but no one can sue us for a percentage of the profits 'cause there are none! As for airplay, the radio stations pay the songwriters via their ASCAP/BMI fees so that really has nothing to do with us.

4. Some of the bands are unfamiliar and seem like "project bands" that might have come together just for this project. True?

Mike: True. It's the kind of light-hearted thing that inspires project bands. In fact, I have to accept responsibility for one of them myself...

5. Any plans to do a Part II? Maybe a 70's cover compilation?

Mike: None at the moment. Childlike Records just released Boss Jim Gettys' *Tigrebeat* and we're gonna put something out by the Milwaukeees later this year. The next comp is looking probably post-Y2K.

Childlike Records, 409 Washington St. #461, Hoboken NJ 07030, or email Pushing9@aol.com

guest editorial

The revolution will be televised (on your personal computer)

By Samuel Nathan Shiffman

It would seem inevitable that a machine that is becoming as ubiquitous as a toaster or a television would take on the same characteristics of our favorite home tools. It must be a real nineties pathology, which eggs us on in our quest to make the P.C. less a boring utilitarian tool and more of a beige family entertainment console (albeit: one that is accessible from most people's cubicles)

Unwilling to allow even a moments static passivity, our best minds have been working non-stop in order to bring the same high quality entertainment options to us during our working hours (which I might add is the only time we get to escape from it.)

Ladies and Gentleman, welcome to real time television brought to you live on your peecee. That's right, can't make it to the Victoria's Secret spring line roll-out, just log in and gander an eyeful (<http://www.victoriasecret.com>). Just make sure to get there early to get your seat or just like the non-virtual event, you will be left high and dry.

While everyone who ever took a course in C++ is tinkering feverishly in their garages trying to build the proverbial better mouse trap, it seems that the folks of <http://www.real.com> in Seattle has beaten the other greyhounds out of the cages. When one thinks of <http://www.webcasting.com> inevitably the feed will be "ENCODED," In the Real Format. Cleaver bastard, our former Microsofter, stadium rising actor Messrs. Paul Allen et al. Build them a cheap TV, give it away for free and then charge the Networks the cost of admission.

Yes folks, the player is free and judging by the daily streams of downloads (million + and counting,) Folks can't seem to pass up a bargain. This means that those who are willing to plunk down the extra shekels for the encoding software have a Hugh potential audience. Judging by the amount of folks who are willing to plunk down and watch my fat ass live (<http://www.njcmr.org/demo.rm>) there is a real hunger for some quality entertainment. But before I get ahead of myself with the pontifications and finger wagging let me draw you a picture on the nuts and bolts of this production:

Ingredients:

- ... PEECEE (Windows, Mac, SGI, UNIX, BE, etc.)
- ... Real Player -Free from Real Dot COM
- ... Content -i.e. something to watch

Content production:

- ... Audio
- ... Video
- ... Live Feed

While the watching is free, the producing part operates on multi-tier pay to play pyramid scheme. Case in point if you have a Mac and want to take your Bar-Mitzvah footage and make it available for all the tribe spread all over the globe you can get the Mac version of the encoder gratis from our buddies over at Real. Here is the Rub. You have to have a method of taking your tapes and inputting them somehow into your putter and then changing it into QuickTime. You can then take your finished masterpiece import it into your encoder and output it into a REAL FILE, one that will play on that little free p.c. TV.

Oh did I mention that no matter how much bandwidth you have, your image is always about the size of one of those little cucumber sandwiches that you get from the queen. The great thing about Real Video is that I can sit at home on my 28k. Modem and spy on my underlings with all those hidden cameras I had installed in the heating duct. In essence real is the great equalizer. My T-3 at work and my shitty phone line at home deliver the same resounding anti-quality. Yippee. If you have a Wintel (my condolences,) the basic encoder should cost you about \$150 smackers, but it does do something cool that our Mac brethren cannot do you can

Stream Live Video. Want to do your own Victoria's Secret Catwalk with Cats. Grab Sasha, Muffins and Mr. Flufferino line em up' plug a camera in, fire up the encoder, and let the girls work it for *hoi polloi* watching from their cubicles world wide. Oops, did I mention that you also need...

- ... A 400mhz Dual Pentium Machine with a
- ... Osprey Video card (Real Video Recommended !)
- ... Access to a Real Video Server (which let me tell you is quite a pricey endeavor and also requires)
- ... A per user licensing arrangement. This means that if you are expecting 10,000 people to watch your webcast you have to purchase the requisite amount of user licensees.

Here is how Streaming Video really works.

In order to stream real video you have to have access to a Real Server otherwise you will be doing what is called virtual streaming. This is when the file is first downloaded to your computer and then played off your system instead of being fed to you in a stream.

Let's steps back a moment and think about what Streaming Video really is.

When we are home most of us are using a 33k modem on our 4 year old Wintel P.C. Most of us also live in places in which the plumbing infrastructure was laid well over 50 years ago. City planners did not expect most of us to be living on top of each other to the extent that we do. That's why our plumbing and

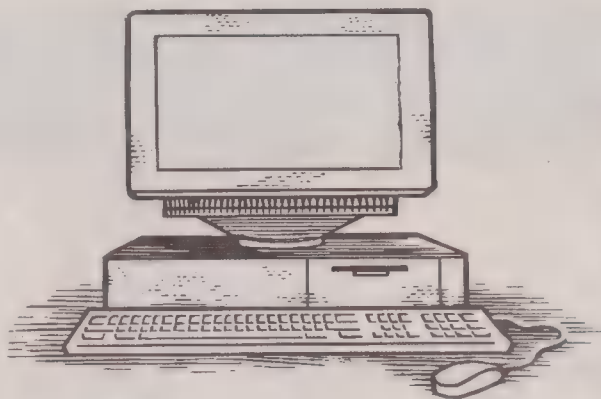
roads ■■■ constantly being worked on. They just weren't designed to handle the amount of traffic that we subject them to.

The Internet is in the ■■■■ state. With all this Multimedia Crap that we are shoving over our shitty archaic phone lines it's ■ wonder anything goes through. If you didn't know Video is very big and when it is shoved onto your computer it takes up lots of space. So by trying to make our computers into remote TV systems it is the equivalent of moving everyone in Mexico City and Tokyo into Des Moines. I don't think that Des Moines social services infrastructure could handle it.

First and foremost what Encoding with Real does is take our large original video source and compact it to 1/10th of its original size (allowing us to deal with the biological refuse of millions of folks with resources meant for thousands.) With Real Video we can store a 2-hour movie easily on our hard-drive. This footage uncompressed could easily require 50 gigs of storage!


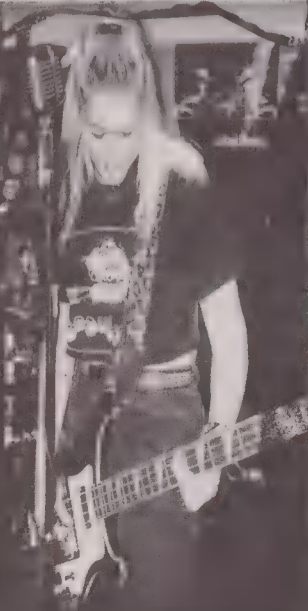

Now here is where the streaming part comes in. Even though we can fit a two-hour movie on our hard drive, it is ■ taking up ■ good 3-4 gigs of storage. Ever try to download ■ program that large using a 33k. Modem? It takes forever. When ■ stream ■ ■ able to watch the video as its being sent ■ opposed ■ having to download the entire fire and then watch it. This is how ■ are able to watch "Live," events over the web. If we couldn't stream then the show would have to be recorded, encoded and downloaded in order to be viewed. Yes kids, with real ■ can watch live video of Victoria's Secret models strutting or Sam's Kitties frolicking with their toy meices.

So is this a good thing? Are thousands of pirate Real Video Stations cropping up? Well the one cool thing is that bunches



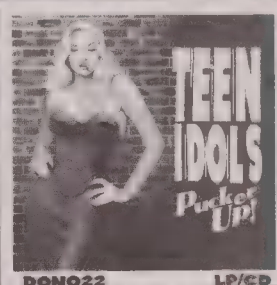
of radio stations are now going Real. I can listen ■ WFMU (91.0 fm. East Orange- <http://www.wfm.org>) from anywhere on the planet. For ■■ strange reason there really isn't much of ■ presence from our big monolithic multimedia conglomerates yet. For example, I would love to listen to NPR (<http://www.npr.org>) when I get to work in the morning. They broadcast their morning edition ■ day behind. I guess no one wants to muck it up for their affiliates yet. As far as folks doing this at home. Remember not only do you need a pretty decent multimedia computer system for the capturing, but also in order to stream you need the Real Server (an investment of tens of thousands of dollars.)


So in conclusion all I can say is that Video over the Internet is inevitable. But I prefer ■ look ■ it like glorified cable TV. 10,000 channels and there still isn't anything on.

TEEN IDOLS

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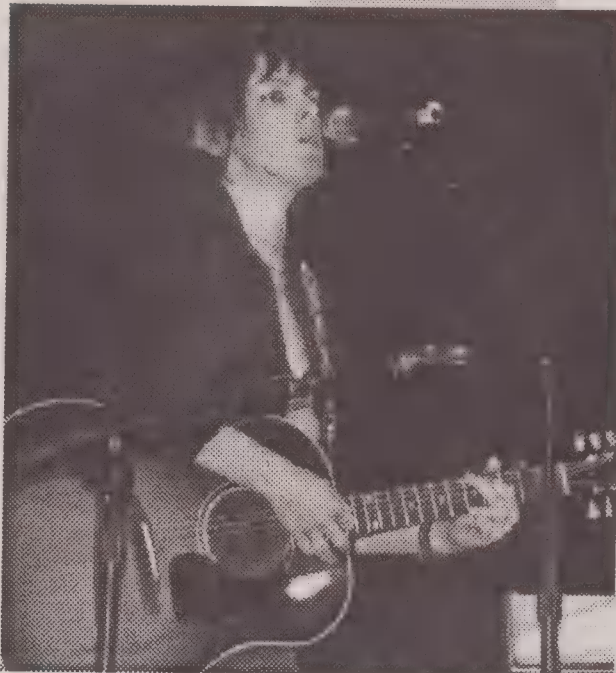
SXSW



Story and photos by Jim Testa

SXSW '99

IT AIN'T WHO YOU
KNOW... 'CAUSE
THEY DON'T
KNOW NEITHER...



Lucinda Williams

AUSTIN, TX - From marketing executives to music journalists, the 10,000 industry insiders who descended on Austin, Texas this past March for the 13th annual South By Southwest Music ■ Media Conference arrived obsessing over troubling questions about the future of their business. But after five intense days and nights of moderated discussions, freestyle shmoozing, and manic club-hopping, most left reassured that, even if they didn't have any of the answers, no one else did either.

South By Southwest (SXSW for short) has become the music business' largest annual gathering, ■ combination business convention and Spring Break bacchanal that lets the industry take its pulse while providing opportunities for both deal-making and socializing.

At the daytime panels at the Austin Convention Center, the corporate takeover of Polygram by Seagram's (which has meant the merger of industry titans like Interscope and MCA with Polydor and Island, ■■ well as the virtual death of struggling labels like A&M and Geffen) provided a constant source of debate. Folk-rocker Lucinda Williams, this year's keynote speaker, sounded ■ clarion call for performers, saying that the new corporate environment meant that artists needed more than ever to control their own destiny. "Keep the power," she said, regaling the industry-savvy audience with horror tales from her ■■■■ career, in between acoustic versions of several of her best-known songs.

At the panel on Wall Street and the music industry that followed, venture capital banker Michael Nathanson commented on ■■ insanity of running an artist-driven business with publicly-held companies, where stock prices rise and fall on the basis of quarterly profit reports. "Artists don't create art on ■ schedule," he said. Nearly everyone agreed that the pressure to keep stock prices up meant that the major labels had to focus on short-term ■■■■ rather than long-term investment in their acts. "We're not in the artist development business anymore," said Al Cafaro, the CEO of A&M Records until the label was dissolved in the wake of the Seagram's merger.

The Internet provided another constant topic of conversation, with some panels focusing on the unlimited opportunities offered by new technology (like the digital downloading of songs) while others noted the increasing concentration of power and influence in the hands of ■ few commercially-successful entities, from web-based magazines like Addicted To Noise to online retailers like amazon.com.

That preoccupation with the uncertain future of the industry spilled over into the nightly showcases. With ■■ acts performing at 45 different ■■■■ over five nights, SXSW offered nearly endless possibilities - from a small army of avant-garde "turntablists" (who create new music by scratching and mixing together old records,) to ■ sizable delegation of hip hop artists, to a seemingly endless onslaught of alternative rock bands, singer-songwriters, blues and country acts.

In the past, SXSW enjoyed an enviable reputation as the place where unsigned bands could land that coveted record deal, or newly-signed acts could be showcased to the press (nearly every important rock critic in the country attends SXSW.) Previous SXSW "buzz bands" have included Material Issue, Helmet, Veruca Salt, and Green Day, all before they enjoyed their commercial breakthroughs. But this year, the attitude had noticeably changed; it was ■■ if no one really cared, or was simply too cynical to pretend anymore. Instead of focusing on ■■■■ talent or trying to root out the Next Big Thing, attendees called in favors and used whatever it took - prestige, clout, or just good old-fashioned standing-in-line - for a chance to ■■■■ old favorites like Jeff Beck, the Flaming Lips,

and the Meat Puppets, or weasel into non-SXSW events like ■ sold-out concert by Tom Waits and an invitation-only party featuring UK teen ■ Robbie Williams.

Still, old dreams die hard; New Jersey's Kowalski's made the 27-hour drive ■ Austin for a chance to perform (and hobnob with industry honchos) for ■ few hours on Thursday, only to turn around and drive back the next morning to make a Saturday night show in New York City.

"The whole thing just blew my mind," said lead singer Lindsey Anderson. "We had heard about the Four Seasons (the hotel of choice for high-level industry dealmakers) so we drove like crazy to make happy hour there." The Kowalski's have an album ready to release and no record label, ■ they ■ were hoping to find some receptive ■■ at SXSW. Instead, they got ■ quick taste of reality.

"The first thing ■ did was order ■ round of drinks for the six of us, and it came to \$48!" Anderson said. "That ■ like our whole budget for the weekend. So we just took our one little drink out to the balcony and enjoyed the sunset." The Kowalski's did play a well-received ■ in front of ■ sizable crowd that evening, but drove back to New Jersey on Friday morning without so much as a business card from anyone at a label.

Hoboken folksinger Kate Jacobs also performed at this year's event but arrived with a much more realistic attitude. "I just come because it's so much fun, and the weather's so nice, and it's just a nice place to play," said Jacobs.

Jacobs and her ■■ - including guitarist Dave Schramm, who also performed a solo set - had ■■ in SXSW before and said they didn't show up with any expectations. "We look at it like the music industry is coming to ■■ us, not like we're coming to play for them," said bassist James MacMillan. "After all, they dress up a whole lot more for the show than we do."

Jersey's Electric Frankenstein brought their old-school hardcore punk to Emo's, one of Austin's largest venues, and performed in front of ■ crowd ■ huge that fire marshals had to bar the entrances to keep any more people from jamming into the club. "It was nuts," said guitarist Sal Canzonieri, "they had to have bouncers stand in the doors and push people away, it ■■ so crowded."

Anecdotes abound at an event as sprawling as SXSW, but few seem as telling as this one: Two years ago, the Texas-based trio Radish - fronted by then-15 year old singer/guitarist Ben Kweller - signed to Mercury Records for ■ whopping \$2.5 million. But after the mega-platinum success of Hanson, Mercury decided ■ didn't need

two teen-idol acts and label interest in Radish all but vanished. This year, Kweller ■ Co. returned ■ Austin to play an unremarkable 1 a.m. showcase at a small club, and ■■ label that had lavished millions of dollars on ■■ band just two years earlier didn't bother to send ■ single representative to the show.

The turn of events didn't seem ■■ rankle Radish, who played a polished set of catchy bubble-grunge pop to an enthusiastic (if small) crowd of fans and college radio kids. "Thank you, South By Southwest," said Kweller, now a poised veteran of 18. Then he finished his set and, to polite applause, lugged his hefty amp off the stage and back into the van, a little too busy planning tomorrow night's show to worry about being yesterday's Next Big Thing.

Night By Night SXSW Diary

Thursday, March ■

One nice thing about Austin is that you ■■ zip around from club to club on foot and hit about 80% of the major venues; only ■ few require cab rides. So the plan for Thursday involved ■ lot of running around and checking out The Sheila Divine, Grand Mal, and ■ few other bands. But the time I reached Fat Tuesday's on Sixth Street (Austin's main drag,) a heavy rain had escalated into a torrential downpour, flooding drought-baked streets, canceling ■ few shows (including Willie Nelson,) and soaking bands and fans alike. Mover, the band I wanted to see ■ Fat Tuesday's, turned out to be ■ major disappointment - old Rolling Stones by way of Black Crows country blues rock. Think of ■ bar band doing covers of "Honky Tonk Woman" and "Happy" over and over and over.... Well, ■ least it was dry in there.

Fortunately, I had an umbrella with me and braved the elements for the quick walk to Emo's, one of Austin's premier alt-rock venues. Unfortunately, Emo's main room is pretty much open-air, and the heavy rain had overpowered the drainage system and left the fans unable to fit under the little bit of roofing over the stage standing in about 3 inches of water. It ■■ Lookout! Records night and ■ I arrived, the Hi Fives were about mid-way through their set. As my buddy Jim DeRogatis noted, there's nothing sadder than a wet Mod. The Hi-Fives natty black suits were soaked to the skin and their Freddy ■ The Dreamers haircuts plastered ■ their skulls, but they still managed to rock the (soggy) ■■ off the crowd. Unwilling to stand up ■ my ankles in water, I opted to duck back inside to "Emo's



L.A.S. Stitches at the Electric Lounge



Pansy Division, top; The Kowalski's

Jr.," the smaller inside stage, for the Kowalski's set. I hadn't seen the band since the departure of founding members Paul Richard on guitar and Jack Steeples on bass. Bass duties now belong to Marcelo Romero (whose been in bands in Jersey Beat since he was a teenager,) whose raunchy Johnny Thunders-ish stage presence nicely complements frontwoman Lindsey Anderson (resplendent if a bit sweaty tonight, given the 100% humidity, in a steel-gray cocktail dress and knee-high go-go boots.) I'm happy to report the band hasn't lost any of its bubblegum punk swagger and the crowd (mostly Austin locals, not SXSW'ers, from what I could see) loved them.

Given the mess outside, I decided to ditch my other plans and stick it out with Emo's, happily catching Joe King and the Queens climbing on stage to do a song with the garage-punk Smugglers. The packed house quickly forgot about the messy weather and a mass teenage riot cum singalong ensued. The Donna's followed, not wilted at all by the weather - just loud, a bit sloppy, but totally rocking.

The crowd thinned out a bit after their set but there was still a decent crowd on hand for Pansy Division. Frontman Jon Ginoli looked a little worse for wear after the rain, but drummer Luis managed to stay crisp and sharp in a natty mod suit, white ties, and short pants. With the addition of lead guitarist Patrick, this band isn't just funny and playful anymore - they actually sound like a great rock and roll band now, with a much fuller sound and some wicked metal solos. Pansy Division appeals to a really diverse crowd, too; there were a half dozen people right around me who looked 35 or older, while the kid to my immediate right couldn't have been more than 20, knew every lyric to every song, and pogo'd through the entire set.

Friday, March 19

Why do I go to SXSW every year? Nice weather, great food, old friends, lots of bands... and moments like this one: 17-year old Conor Oberst from Omaha fronts a band called Bright Eyes. It's a little like the Elephant 6 Collective, in that the members (all teenage boys) shift instruments and come and go during the set, so every song is played with slightly different instrumentation. Conor sings in a hoarse monotone, and his songwriting runs heavily toward teen angst with not a lot of melody. I was actually getting a bit bored by it, until the last song, when the rest of the band left Conor alone on stage with his acoustic guitar. Then he sang a song - screamed it, really, tearing his guts out in the process - filled with such anger, cynicism, and bitter desperation that it almost moved me to tears. "I fell for the promise of a future with a purpose, but I know now that it will never come..." And he wrote this at 16! That song paid for the whole weekend.

Bright Eyes was playing at the Electric Pavillion, a tent erected outside one of Austin's coolest clubs, the Electric Lounge. Unfortunately, according to the Austin newspapers, the club is barely scraping by and may get out of business by next year's SXSW, which would be a pity. It's got a lot of character and is a great place to see bands. I dashed back and forth between the Deep Elm Showcase inside the Lounge (the witty, campy, gay twee-pop of Muckaferguson, the dour tuneless emo of Camber) and the bands outside in the Pavilion tent: Bright Eyes, Pinehurst Kids (a pop/punk band from Portland, OR compared to Green Day, or so they say, that I found unimaginative, unexciting, and un-Green Day-like in the extreme) and Supafuzz, a generic hard-rock trio that should stick to playing bars back home in Kentucky.

A mad dash across town and I was at the Copper Tank Brewery for hometown heroes the Sidedoor Johnnies, who played a moving set of their cerebral indie-pop to a disappointingly thin audience. The Johnnies are caught up in the riptide of the Seagram's/Polygram merger; the faux-indie label that had signed them has been dissolved, and parent corporation Mercury can't figure out if it wants to keep them or not.

Frontman Dan Skinner had poured a lot of energy and time into sending out industry invites to this show but they didn't pay off; I could tell he was disappointed, but the band played its usually riveting set nonetheless.

A hearty round of applause, a pat on the back for Dan and the guys, and I was off to Emo's, where I managed to catch the last two songs by the Queers, not the sort of band you'd associate with a major corporate music festival. But they packed the place like you wouldn't believe; you could hear the crowd singing along to "This Place Sucks" a block away!

Since I had been standing (or running around) all night, I desperately wanted a place to sit down, so I walked down the street a bit to a new club called the Red Eyed Fly, which has a very nice backyard patio with lots of chairs. While eavesdropping on some British industry scum inflate one another's egos, I listened to the roar from L7 and the Unsane wafting over in the evening breeze from Stubbs, another outdoor venue a hundred yards away. Then it was time for Radish, the former buzz band who were the subject of an insane bidding war two years ago. Mercury signed the trio, fronted by singer-guitarist-pianist-songwriter Ben Kweiler (all of 15 years old at the time!), reportedly for more than \$2 million dollars (outbidding Madonna in the process.) But then another trio named Hanson came along, and Mercury lost interest in Radish. So here was Kweiler and his band, back at SXSW but playing to a half-empty small club at 1 a.m., with no one from a major label anywhere in sight. Frankly, I think the kid is better off; he's very talented, but he needs time to grow, and now he'll get it without the pressure to produce platinum albums. I had always heard Radish described as a teen-grunge band (Kweiler's resemblance to a junior-high version of Kurt Cobain was a bit eerie), but the music is much more indie pop, especially since Kweiler plays about a third of the songs on electric piano (sounding much more like Carole King than Nirvana!) Despite that \$2 million advance, I will also note that the band's equipment was nothing special (old dual Fender amp for Ben, ratty old drumkit for 17 year old John Kent,) and the kids humped the gear on and off stage all by themselves. So goes the life of the Next Big Thing, one year later.

Saturday, March 20

SXSW has two agendas: The one set up by the festival, and the unofficial one composed of private parties that run throughout the entire convention. This year's to-do's included an after-hours all-night bash hosted by Spin, featuring the Flaming Lips; ex-Take That teen heartthrob Robbie Williams' only SXSW appearance at another private party; and an afternoon barbeque/listening party hosted by Checkered Past Records, at which Hoboken's Dave Schramm performed. Not surprisingly, I wasn't invited to any of them (thanks, Dave), but I did cadge an invite to Popsmeat's Saturday afternoon bash at the Electric Lounge, where I caught a bit of Brother Wayne Kramer's incendiary set and a rockin' appearance by NYC's own L.E.S. Stitches.

I wanted to catch earthlings?, the new band fronted by old pal Pete Stahl (of Wool and D.C.'s legendary Scream) at 8 p.m., but wound up going to dinner with a fascinating batch of folks, including (speaking of legendary) Ed Ward from the old Creem magazine and Jason Gross, who does the excellent music website Perfect Sound Forever (www.furious.com/perfect), as well as my roomie for the weekend, Jim DeRogatis, rock critic at the Chicago Sun-Times. The company was much better than the foot, though, and we wound up waiting nearly an hour for a table; by the time we got back to the

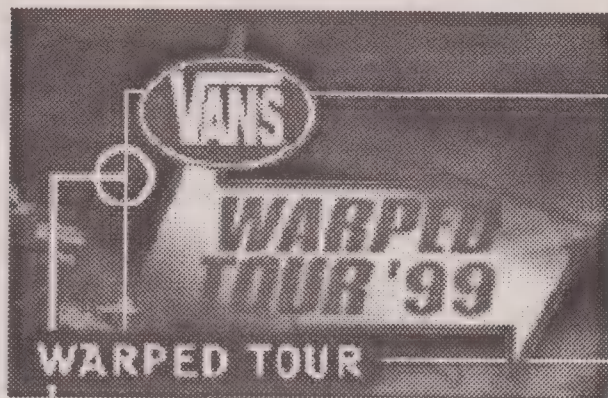
hotel, it was nearly 10 p.m., just in time for DeRo and I to hustle over to Emo's for Electric Frankenstein. These Jersey boys' old-school garage-punk wowed the packed-to-capacity crowd jammed into the club's open-air main room (at least the rain had relented and the weather returned to balmy Spring temperatures); DeRo flipped over them and wrote some very nice things in his Sun-Times feature on the festival.

DeRo was pooped and, quite frankly, the pickings were really slim anyway, so he went back to the hotel to work on his SXSW story and I walked over to a Sixth Street club called Maggie Mae's for Anne Summers. This D.C. power-pop trio, good friends with NJ's own Evelyn Forever, and I had caught them a few times in New Brunswick opening for E4E. The guys put on a good, solid show - the owner of the club seemed in 7th Heaven through their set (but then, this guy spends most of the year listening to blues, metal, and the crappy cover bands who usually play Maggie Mae's during the 51 weeks of the year when SXSW isn't going on.) Maggie Mae's has a glass



For all the hype, Austin's not as hip as you might think. Austinites gawked at Anne Summers (above) as if they were from another planet. But the vast majority of people cruising Sixth Street that night were locals and tourists, not SXSW'ers, and they were so used to shlocky Top 40 that they'd probably never seen a real live pop band up close before.

storefront looking out onto Sixth Street and the stage is right at the front of the club; so it's a little like playing in Macy's window, with passers-by constantly gawking at the band from the street. What was weird was the look on their faces when they heard Anne Summers; men, women, teens, kids, they all looked positively shocked; eyebrows raised, mouths hanging open. Even the bassist from Anne Summers noticed and commented on it. But the vast majority of people cruising Sixth Street were locals and tourists, not SXSW'ers, and they were probably so used to shlocky Top 40 that they'd probably never seen a real live pop band up close before.



Warped Values?

The Warped Tour **sure** sounds like a good idea. So why does it going to see it suck every year?



Since I couldn't get close enough to take a photo of Suicidal Tendencies, I offer this stylization by artist Mike Ramek.

Story and photos by Jim Testa

There are certain things that just don't go together, like oil and water, or drinking and driving. Or, as is increasingly becoming clear at the annual Warped Tour, punk rock and money.

For the uninitiated, the Warped Tour is a summer-long touring festival that includes live music, exhibitions of extreme athletics like skateboarding and BMX biking, dozens of merchandise booths, and marathon mosh pits. The musical fare runs heavily toward punk rock and hardcore, flavored with a little ska, swing, metal, and alternative rock.

It's a great idea - on paper. For about a \$25 ticket (less than half of what you'd pay to see Bruce Springsteen this summer, less than a third of what they're charging for the Paul Simon/Bob Dylan tour), you get to see dozens of bands, from big national touring acts to locals, along with some radical skaters and bikers. The Warped Tour is also the America's Mall of tour merch, and along with the T-shirts, baseball caps, jewelry, CD's, and 7-inches that you buy, usually for less than retail, there's always a ton of promotional crap, from stickers to CD's, that you can snag for free. In Punk rock, equality rules, so the lineup changes every day, and the bands get a half hour on stage. That means there's no fucking around. Everyone plays the hits - bang bang bang - and the music never stops. As soon as the band on one stage is finished, the band on the next stage starts playing.

Sounds great so far, doesn't it? So why, once you get there, does it always suck so bad?

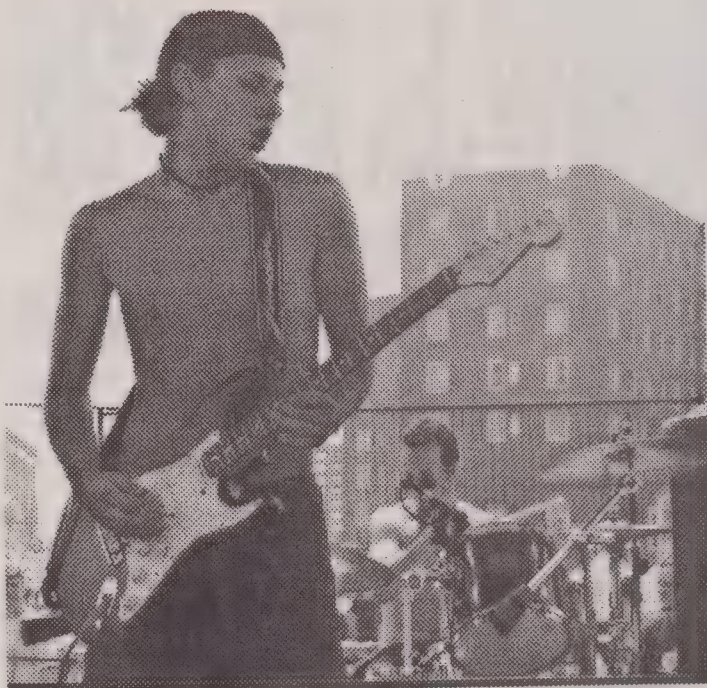
Again, it's the inevitable clash (excuse the pun) of punk idealism and hard commerce. It costs a lot of money to put on a show as big as the Warped Tour. And that means making a lot of compromises.

As evidenced by the summer punkathon's New Jersey incarnation, which set down in Asbury Park in mid-July this year, the Warped Tour's target audience runs heavily toward adolescent males in their teens and early twenties, most of whom spend the day shirtless and sweaty, dividing their time between watching the bands, destroying their bodies in the mega-mosh pits at the two main stages, strolling the merchandise booths, and checking out the skateboarders and bikers defying gravity on the giant vert ramp. Do girls go to the Warped Tour? Sure, some of them arm in arm with their boyfriends, some on their own. But it isn't their tour. Everything at the Warped Tour seems designed with boys in mind.

Let's start with the biggest problem for the Warped Tour at a venue like Asbury Park - space. In the past, the tour crammed itself into the Stone Pony parking lot. This year, with the Stone Pony gone, a new promoter moved the site up the boardwalk a bit, but the available space was still grossly inadequate for five stages, dozens of merchandise booths, the extreme skating exhibitions, and everything else that goes along with the tour. As a result, fans found themselves crammed together elbow to elbow during the busiest (and hottest) part of the day, barely able to move from stage to stage.

Concessions are always overpriced at these festivals - many fans blamed the riots that ended Woodstock '99 on the outlandish prices fans had to pay for food and water - and it's no different at the Warped Tour. You would think anyone expecting 25,000 fans on a hot summer day would make some provision to provide free water. Remember those great misting booths they used to have at Lollapalooza? The Warped Tour's version? A single hose set up next to the first aid tent that you could douse yourself with if you got overheated (after you stood in line for a while.) If drinking out of a rubber hose didn't seem appealing, you had to purchase bottled water, soda, or paper cups of watery lemonade for three dollars a pop. (I won't even mention the bathroom facilities - 10 porta-toilets for 25,000 fans, and no place to wash your hands? There's cost-effective planning for you.)

At the Warped Tour you could find something to drink; food was downright scarce, limited to a few pizza stands (serving cold, expensive slices of Domino's pizza trucked in from outside the venue) and two or three hot dog wagons, serving \$3 weiners that spent the day swimming in vats of greasy water that looked like some kind of toxic waste. Last year's tour, at the more hospitable Stone Pony site, offered much more variety, at more reasonable prices.



Top, Union Spirit from Howell, NJ on the Locals Stage. Bottom, some bands had music in their ears, some people had... other things.



So what about the music? There, at least, fans received some value for their ticket dollars. Mainstream rock fans whose grasp of punk stemmed largely from MTV - and there seemed to be plenty of them - got excited over performances by current buzz bands like Blink 182 and Pennywise, whose high-energy, high-testosterone sets served up enjoyable if nondescript knockoffs of genre innovators like Green Day and Bad Religion. With so many bands on the bill, it was inevitable that some of them would suck, like Aussie grungesters Grinspoon or the utterly generic Common Sense. But there were plenty of good bands too. It was great to hear Suicidal Tendencies again after so many years, playing their melodic street hardcore (these guys are a lot more than just "Institutionalized"). And while I usually half-listened to most of the main stage bands, I didn't budge an inch while Bouncing Souls and Less Than Jake were on stage. These two bands slay crowds in clubs, but they were just as entertaining playing in front of thousands, especially with those pared-down half-hour sets, banging out one killer tune after another.

Not surprisingly, 7 Seconds - still, after more than a decade, one of the great live bands in punk rock - delivered one of the standout sets of the day. But why were they shunted off to the small "Bus Stage?" They certainly drew enough of a crowd to have qualified for one of the main stages. Lead singer Kevin Seconds was also the one performer all day heard to say anything about introducing rap acts like Eminem (or last year's Kid Rock) to the Warped Tour. Kevin didn't say anything against rap as a genre, but asked why a tour that supposedly upholds true "punk" ideals would book acts whose stage patter includes lines like "Show us your breasts" and other expletives that offended women in the audience.

Inviting local bands to perform is another Warped Tour innovation that seems like a good idea but suffers in its execution. Granted, having a Locals Stage gives bands that usually play halls and small clubs access to 25,000 fans. But unlike last year, when high-caliber regional acts like L.E.S. Stitches, the Kowalskis, Anthrophobia, and Vision Of Disorder got to perform, the selection process for this year changed. Bands had to audition for the local promoter and, if selected, were required to sell at least 100 tickets before being allowed to perform at the tour. In rock clubs, that's called "Pay For Play," a one-sided system that exploits musicians and, from my point of view, has no place in punk (or even indie rock.)

Stick Figure Suicide, one of the New Jersey bands that played Asbury Park's Locals Stage, told me afterwards that they had no qualms about selling the tickets to their fans, since the band tickets were discounted \$10 below the Ticketmaster price. And they felt that the exposure of playing in front of so many people made the compromise of engaging in "pay for play" worthwhile. But for every hard-working local band like SFS, though, there was some no-name upstart act (like Boston's generic rapcore wannabes, Reveille) who got on the Locals Stage because their major label paid for the tickets.

Okay, bottom line: Did I have a good time? Sure. It was a day out in the sun, I got to see some cool bands, I bumped into a lot of friends and got to chat a bit... Of course, I didn't pay for my ticket, and I didn't wait an hour on line to get in, and I didn't have my heart set on seeing a band that wound up going on either too late or too early for me to catch (which does happen - quite a bit, in fact.)

The one memory I'll take away from this year's Warped Tour, though, had nothing to do with the bands. During the busiest part of the day, when I was elbowing my way through the crowd trying to move from stage to stage, I kept hearing people in the crowd grumbling to themselves, over and over, just loud enough to hear, "This sucks."

And I can't say I disagreed with them.



W.E. Fest '99

Wimps Need Not Apply

Story and Photos by Jim Testa

In a week filled with unforgettable memories, there's ■■■ moment from the 4th Annual Wilmington Exchange (or W.E.) Festival that will stick in my head forever. It happened on Monday evening, ■■■ grungy little bar that was serving as that night's showcase venue, during Nipple's set. Frontman Jhon Thumb - shoulder-length hair plastered to his face by sweat, and dressed in full Lenny Kravitz retro-70's drag - was tearing through one of his patented wah-wah and feedback solos. It ■■■ a transcendent rock 'n' roll moment, quite probably the best gig Nipple ever played. The club ■■■ going nuts, as a gaggle of indie-rockers unleashed the 15-year old metalhead that still lived inside their souls, rushing the stage and banging their heads to the music. And off in the corner, backs pressed against the wall, stood two members of Pinstripe, the next band on the bill, quaking like a pair of Methodists who'd just been introduced to Satan, holding their ears for dear life and praying for the set to end.

So let's get ■■■ thing straight right from the start: W.E. Fest ain't for everybody. If you show up expecting ■ quiet little weekend at ■■■ beach with some rock 'n' roll on the side, you're going to go home disappointed and confused. The only way to really experience this seven-day bacchanal is to throw yourself into it headfirst, forget about sleep, and surrender your soul to the spirit of DIY. Think of it ■■■ a one-week Outward Bound survival course for indie rockers. The goal isn't to go home tan and refreshed, but to stretch yourself to your limits and leave a better, stronger human being.

For the uninitiated, the W.E. Festival takes place over seven days at the end of May, wrapping around the Memorial Day Weekend, in the college town of Wilmington, North Carolina. As in other festivals, bands submit tapes and CD's and are chosen to perform ■■ showcases. Unlike most other festivals, ■■■ rule is that you can only showcase once; moreover, bands with major label affiliations or distribution are not invited, nor are working members of the music industry. Some bands ■■■ invited to return, but they play after the showcasing bands, at special late-night performances ■■■ that typically run to dawn.

The W.E. Festival isn't just about music, though. True to its name, every year the festival sets up a headquarters known as The Exchange. Fanzines from across the country are invited to send copies of their back issues - for free - to be distributed ■■■ the Exchange. There's also a stash of donated CD's and tapes that festivalgoers can freely sample. (This year's Exchange was the backroom of The Dixie Grill, a greasy spoon diner in the heart of downtown Wilmington. The



Top: the mighty **Scat Farkus Affair**
Center: the mind-blowing **XBRX**
Bottom: the sublime **Mill Mulliganos**

ocation worked out fine except for the born-again lady who runs the joint; we had to throw a tarp over the zines at night so she wouldn't see the cuss words and satanic images on the covers.) One day of the festival is devoted to an independent film festival, and this year, for the first time, there was also a spoken word event.

There is a special core of people who make W.E. Fest happen, and a wider circle of Wilmingtonites who take part every year, and it's these people who make the magic. Bands and fans come from New Jersey and Baltimore, Oklahoma and Florida, New York City and San Francisco, and no matter where they're from, they're blown away by the unique blend of hospitality, support, enthusiasm, and camaraderie that is Wilmington. W.E. Fest celebrates not only the spirit of Doing It Yourself, but of Doing It Together; those lucky few who figure it out leave Wilmington with a half a dozen new friends and a list of bands from other towns to trade gigs with over the next year.

Not everyone gets it, unfortunately. And sometimes it takes more than one visit. But most of the people who come to W. E. Fest feeling cynical, skeptical, and burnt-out leave with a renewed sense of purpose and the belief that networking at the grassroots level really does offer a viable alternative to the major-label whirligig.

Special thanks this year go to organizers Lee Buffaloe, Rick D'Anjolell, and Ziggy Nix, along with the many other people in Wilmington who helped pull the whole thing together. Dave McNamara of Poetryism.com not only put together the successful spoken word event, but also provided the "W.E. Fester Like..." stickers that everyone enjoyed throughout the week. And then there were Corey, Alexi, and Heidi - the tie-dyed free-spirits from Berkeley, who taped the entire week for Frank Moore's "Luver" Internet radio station (<http://www.eroplay.com/luver>).

For the first three W.E. Fests, I was a guest, and slept on the floor or snared a couch at some local's place. This year, I shared the rent of a house at the beach with Alex Saville and Amy Jacob of Prosolar Mechanics, and three of us got to play host to a small army of friends and bands. It was, far and away, more fun than I've ever had in my life - and this year, I even went through the whole week sober. Next year can't come soon enough.

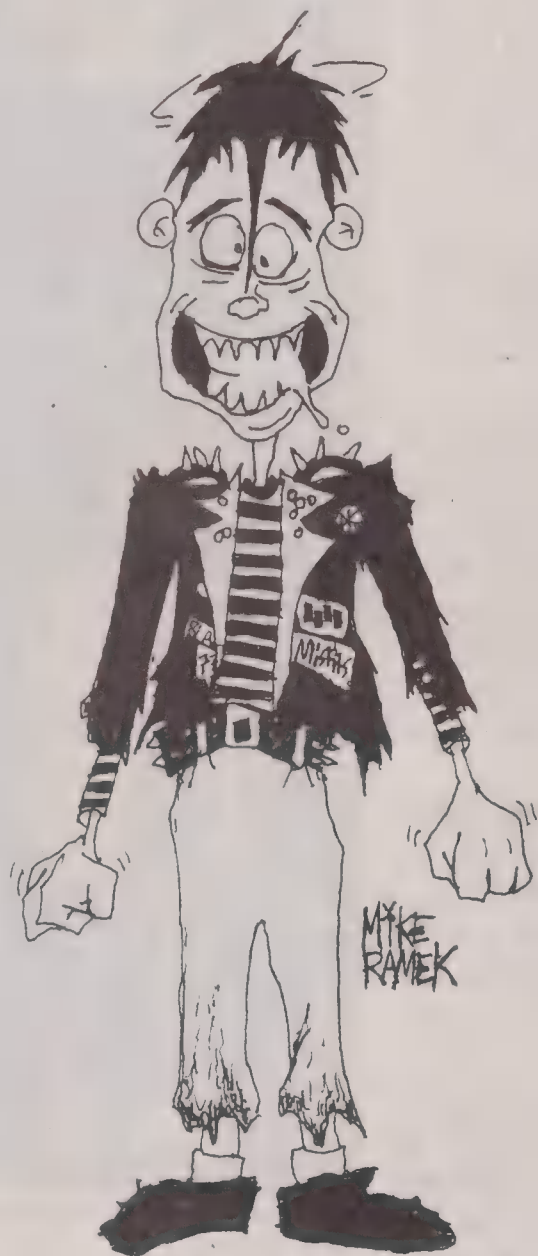
For a fully detailed rundown of the entire week of W.E. Festival, check out the Jersey Beat Web Page at www.jerseybeat.com. If you don't have Internet access, just send us a self-addressed envelope marked "WE Fest Info" c/o Jersey Beat, 418 Gregory Avenue, Weehawken NJ 07087, and we'll pop a copy of the story in the mail for you.



Top: Eddie Yoo from Evelyn Forever getting naked
Bottom: W.E. Fest'er Ziggy Nix reading poetry

Behold non-believers! Avert your eyes and fall to your knees because, Boris the Sprinkler, are here and are squirting their message of spazz all over the world. Led by the modern-lovin', mother truckin' Rev.Nørb, BTS has been spewing the madness since 1994 and shows no signs of slowing down. They have a new line-up and last winter released a record on Go-Kart appropriately called SUCK. I had the unique experience of talking to the good Reverend, so sit back and prepare for a journey to the center of the proverbial mind as Nørb gives all of young America a stern talking to.

Interview by Oliver Lyons



Q: Right. here we go. Now, when you say *Maximumrocknroll* is "gay".... by gay, you mean...?

RN: By gay, I mean, their act of practicing is the homosexual hokey-pokey. I mean that, in essence... actually, no. What I mean to say is, that they're a bunch of limp-wristed twits who, in essence, embody all the wimpy, wussy, limped-dicked... uh... what other sort of gayness is there? I actually just sort of mean the traditional sense of gay in that... they're not rockin'! They're gay! They're not rockin'!

Q: Now I have a complaint. Where do you get off mocking George Tabb for attempting to release an album on Lookout? Then saying how you are all "high and mighty" because you release your albums on your own label, Buldge, and don't need nobody to hold your hand or tell you what to do. THEN you pull a 180 and release "Russian Robot" 7-inch on Lookout and release your new album on Go-Kart. So are you suckin'-dick for the man now or is this just a one-off, or Buldge become too much work and you need help?

RN: Well, I definitely need help... but actually I covered my tracks pretty well, I think. If you go back and research it, I think I said that there was nothing wrong with other people doing it, but my major gripe with George was that he was sort of crying in his beer because he couldn't find anybody to do it (release his album) for him. It's sort of like one of those things where, you know, you masturbate or you can have or if you can't find anyone to masturbate for you. Well, if you want, you masturbate if you want, or maybe I want to have with you, you can jump right into that. But that's not to say that, if no one wants to have with you, you're simply unable to provoke orgasm from your own body.

Q: I'll figure that out later.

RN: Well, that'll make one of us.

Q: So how did this record deal come about? Did Go-Kart approach you?

RN: Oddly enough, it was a very straight deal. I believe Greg from Go-Kart sicced on me by Dave from the Parasites. We had just about finished recording that album (points to *SUCK*) and I was going to release it myself. But within two days of completing the album, Greg calls me up at my place of employment and said, "So, do you ever want to do a record with us?". I said well, if you want to put out the new record go ahead, I don't care, it's your funeral, daddy-o. So there you go.

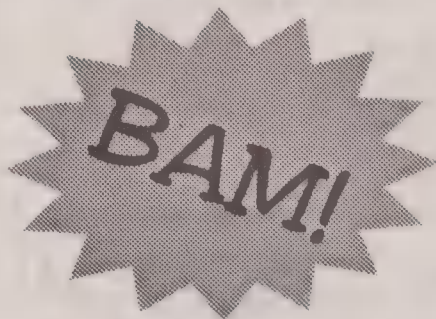
Look out! It's reverend NØRB!

Q: So you have a new job writing for *Hit List* but are you still doing *Sick Teen*?

RN: *Sick Teen* comes out, as always, once every four million years.

Q: I'll be there.... Give the readers at home a brief history of how Boris the Sprinkler came into being.

RN: There were all these losers, see, and we were sitting in a basement in Green Bay, Wisconsin with nothing to do. Actually, these three guys who are on the album cover who are not me were playing old punk rock songs in a basement; countless, tunelessly and without hope. So one day they called me up and I wasn't answering my phone at that time in my life because I didn't want anything to do with anybody, so they left a message on my machine saying, "we've decided you're the singer in our band



so you should be practice Tuesday night, Thursday night and Sunday night." So I like, "I'm not in your band, I don't even want to be your band!" So they were like, "You're the singer and you gotta come be in the band!" So eventually they talked me into coming over and seeing their band and I thought they kinda sucked. So then the drummer and the guitar player called me over again and said that the guy who played bass wasn't there so could I just come over and play bass and we'll JAM. So I like, "Okay, we'll JAM." So I went over and we were JAMMING when all of a sudden the bass player shows up and said, "Hey I gotta play bass!", so he took the bass so I had nothing to do so I had to sing.

Q: Now the Donnas have recently appeared in a big Hollywood movie, any chance of Boris making the scene in Tinsel Town?

RN: Well I'm giving the fact that we live in Green Bay, Wisconsin and most movies are not shot anywhere near our hometown, you think it would be awful difficult for me to land any sort of movie type role. Plus.. uh... Paul I would never go for it.

Q: All right, Paul #1 - movies... would you be in one?

P#1: I probably don't photograph that well (laughs.)

Q: Makes sense. All right, let's talk about cloning... you're a science guy, yes or no?

RN: Cloning is good... I think. It's all depending, but I think you could do a lot of really fucked up shit with cloning. Like, you could do something where you could have one person on top of one person's body on the bottom of one person's body and do all sorts of madcap stuff. It's sort of like having Adobe Photoshop™ but being able to apply it to real life. So I think the ability for creative potential by making really funny looking human and interesting things you always wanted to do with a human, like saying, "Oh, what if that person had that head on that body?", you could probably do it. So I'm for it.

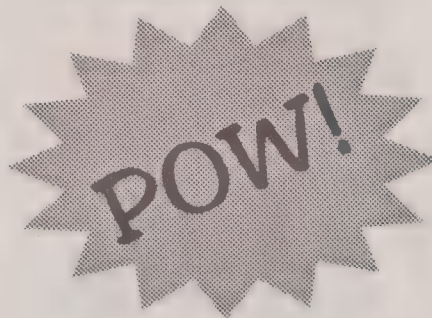
Q: Word, so are you as disappointed as I am with the new *Star Wars* fiasco going on?

RN: I actually do not care about *Star Wars* that much because I always sort of thought that it was really part of my little brother's generation. Although, the day *Star Wars* opened in Green Bay, Wisconsin, in June, 1977, he and I did stand in line and I was the seventh and eighth person in line to see the premier of it. But I never saw the third until it got reissued because this two year old kid I was baby-sitting wanted to see it.

Q: Now you're a comics fan. Name three titles we should all be reading.

RN: Current titles?

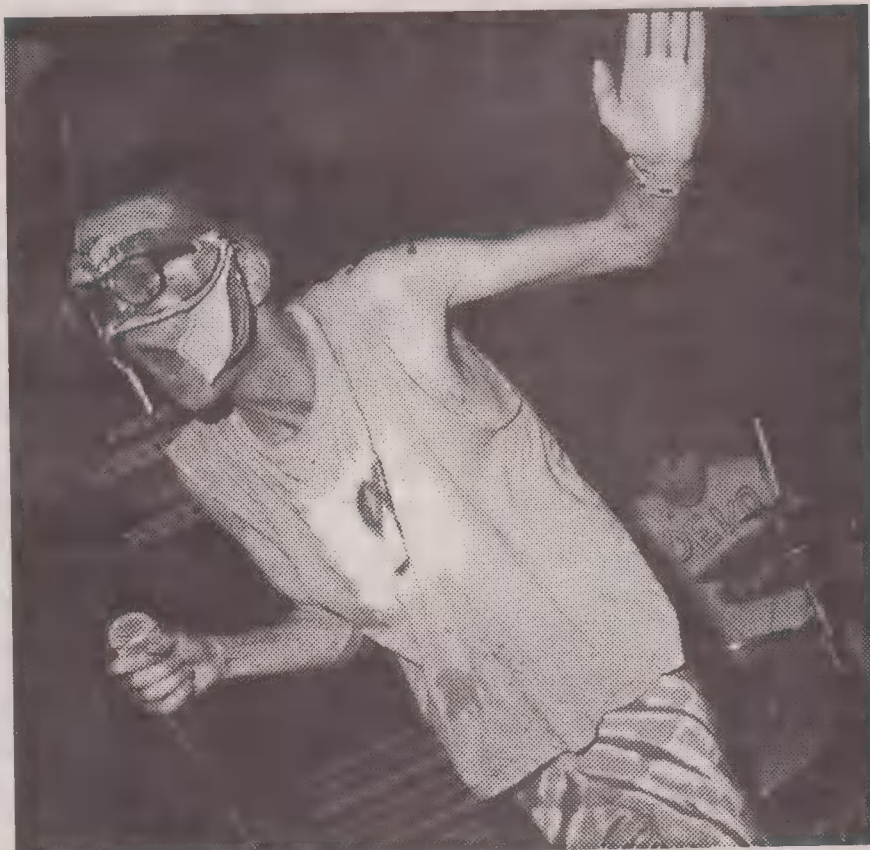
Q: Any titles, any genre.



RN: Well right now I have to say you want the Silver Age, 1960's, *Avengers*, *X-men* and *Justice League of America*, 'cause those are the ones I have the most of. Of the first one hundred and five issues of *Justice League of America*, I have every one but number three, I've got the first one hundred issues of *Avengers*...

Q: How about *West Coast Avengers*?

RN: West Coast? Ennnghh... I actually



Yes, it's Reverend Norb

Photo by Shawn Scallen

liked the *Great Lakes Avengers* because they were based out of Milwaukee but they never really took off. But I think everyone should read the comic books I want because then they'll want the comic books I want and that way people will, like, respect my comic book collection more and respect me as a human and a comic book collector more.

Random person: Tell them about the Boris comic!

Q: You got a comic coming out?! Like Gas Huffer?



RN: Well, Greg sort of brought up the fact that the Lunachicks have a comic book coming out on some sort of Go-Kart comic book label and the Meatmen are doing one so he's like, "You should do a Boris one!" So I'm like, "Yeah, we got a guy to draw one, but I wanna draw it!" So now I'm sort of on the hook and don't know where to begin or what the hell to do. But what I think I'm gonna do is, since we've had seven or eight or nine members, is have them all in the comic so everybody gets killed.

Q: Like Fred Hembeck once did. So, likewise, name three albums everyone should purchase immediately.

RN: Well... see... now that's kind of a trick question again. I'm just gonna take the cowards way out and say the first three Ramones albums, but I don't like that idea very much.

Q: Recent albums.

RN: Well how recent is recent? I'd say, Lori and the Chones, Total Fucking Genocide. I'd say... No!... Wait! I'm gonna change my mind. I'm gonna totally sort of gyrate around the topic but leave the Lori and the Chones thing in there because I can't think of two other albums that are as good as that that I've heard recently. But the last threesome of albums that I bought were the Power Pearls Vol. 1-3 collection, which is sort of like the Killed By Death thing, except that it's late 70's/early 80's power pop/mod stuff. I think everyone should buy those because... well, actually there is no reason. But you should buy it because then you will appreciate the fact that I told you to buy it, then you bought it and then you go, "Wow! These

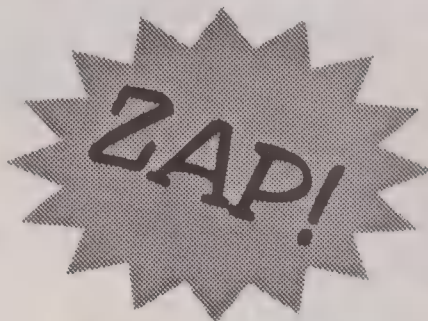
albums cost a lot and I don't like this music very much." But then you'll think, "what is that man thinking?...What is that man thinking?" And it'll cause a lot of thought and discussion in the scene.

Q: And no one should buy the new Spaceshits album, am I correct?

RN: I actually don't think that album is that bad. Of course I've only listened to it once. Mind you, I liked them more than anyone else to begin with. Obviously it's no, Winter Dance Party, but I think that the new Spaceshits album is to the first Spaceshits album what the second Undertones album is to the first Undertones album which is to say, no where near the glorious heights but probably still worth owning.

Q: Now you were on the Jenny Jones show once before. Have they asked you back or do you plan on appearing on another show? Has Springer called you?

RN: I don't want to go on Jerry Springer because I don't want to get punched. I actually knew someone who was on Jerry Springer. She was this transsexual chick who sometimes takes out ads in the newspaper I work for. He's got a real low voice and calls himself, Mistress Stephanie. So sometimes I'll have to pick up the phone and it'll be like, "is Al there?" "No, Al's not here can I take a message?" "Yes, tell him (in low voice) STEPHANIE called." I'm like, "can I get that name again?" "Uh..STEPHANIE." So that person was on Jerry Springer and I



feel I'd just be following in his / her footsteps. But the guy who did get me on the Jenny Jones show said that any time I wanted to go back I could. So apparently if I'm trying to hook up a date or something I could go back on T.V and plead for it.

Q: So Charles Grodin hasn't called you? Rosie O'Donnell?

RN: Oddly enough, no. But then again I haven't gotten my girlfriend's sister's mother pregnant or... well actually, never mind.

Q: Now that the presidential impeachment fiasco is over, do you think that this is a victory for perverts everywhere? Did we win?

RN: Well, I said grievously, I think it's sort of a loss because I can't believe that the leader of the free world can't find a chick who swallows.

Q: That's a quote if I ever heard one! Name two Oscar Meyer™ fun facts about Wisconsin.

RN: The Weinermobile™ is often parked outside the Holiday Inn™ downtown and uh... Once Paul #1 and Paul #2 ate the Oscar Meyer construction factory or something in Pennsylvania and both got diarrhea at the exact same time and had to run into the club in Allentown and both shit in these stalls that had no doors and faced each other at the same time.

Q: Cool. Any last words for the kids?

RN: We're jet-setting hicks from hell and we apologize for our even being here!

Q: Amen.

Speaketh to Boris at: P.O. Box 1173, Green Bay, WI 54305

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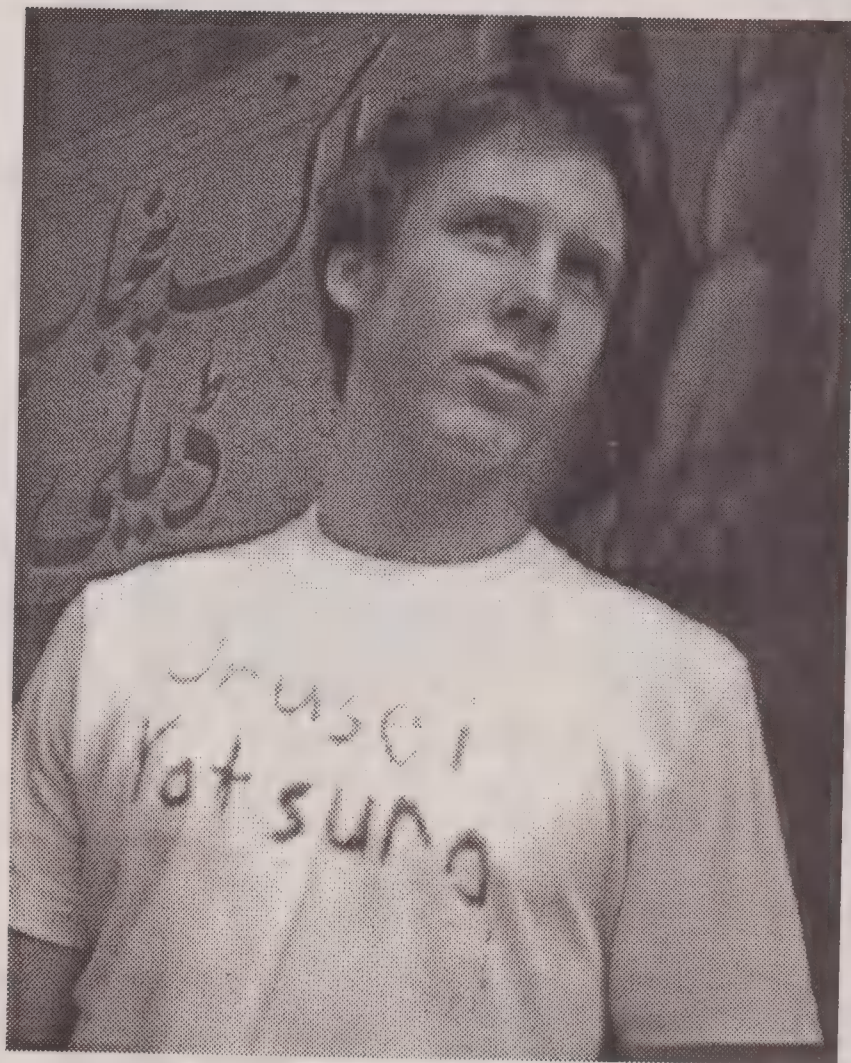
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Whatever happened to



By Jim Testa

Imagine this: You're 14 years old, living in a small town in Texas, and you've got this little rock and roll band... and all of a sudden, a bunch of grown men with expense accounts start telling you that you're the most talented kid on the planet and you're going to make millions. These empty suits start waving money in your face, talking about multi-album, multi-year, multi-million dollar deals, and before you know it, Madonna shows up and says that she wants you too. And so you talk to your dad and you talk to the lawyers and you talk to the suits, and you sign this piece of paper that's supposed to make you rich and famous, and then every magazine on the planet proclaims you The Next Big Thing.

And then you're not.

It sounds like a fairy tale, or a nightmare, or a really bad made-for-TV movie, but it actually happened to Ben Kweller, whose band Radish became the focus of a multi-million dollar major-label bidding war back in 1994. Radish wound up signing to Mercury Records and the hype and promises and money seemed like they would never stop. But Ben Kweller didn't turn out to be The Next Big Thing; that dubious honor went to another pubescent phenomenon from the Southwest named Hanson. And quicker than you can say "Mmmmbop," Radish went from top of the heap to the middle of nowhere.

Restraining Bolt, Radish's Mercury debut, turned out to be a promising but ultimately disappointing collection of post-grunge ditties that the label chose not to promote, and the band quickly disappeared from view. Rumor had it - in fact, Neil Strauss of The New York Times reported - that Mercury had dropped the band and Radish had broken up.

End of story, right?

Radish's Ben Kweller on hype

the Next Big Thing?

Wrong. Radish lives. The band turned up at last Spring's South By Southwest Music & Media Festival, where they played a small club at 1 a.m. with virtually no music business presence at all — just an enthusiastic room full of local fans. And it turns out that it wasn't all hype — Ben Kweller really is a remarkably gifted young man — a songwriter, singer, guitarist, and pianist of enormous charm and considerable range, far more than the adolescent Kurt Cobain wannabe he was painted in the music press during the Radish signing frenzy. He writes pop songs on piano with the warmth and grace of Carole King, and he can rock out on guitar as well. I was impressed, and I smelled a story too. What's it like being last year's Next Big Thing?

It turns out that for Ben Kweller, it's no big thing at all. Yes, he expressed disappointment and a few misgivings over the way things turned out. But in fact, despite what you might have read in the Times, Radish is still signed to Mercury Records, although the band's second album for the label has been interminably delayed following the Polygram/Universal merger, when Mercury's entire command structure changed virtually overnight.

Ben Kweller has been doing a lot of growing up in the intervening years, keeping the band tonight and touring when he can, and more recently, leaving his native Texas and moving to Connecticut to be with his girlfriend, who's attending college there.

"I've just been doing what most guys are doing at 18, which is going through a lot of changes in my life," Ben said. But he remains optimistic about this new album, tentatively titled *Sha Sha*, which he says will sound nothing like *Restraining Bolt*.

And if Mercury ever decides to release it, who knows? Radish might very well turn out to be The Next Big Thing all over again.

The following conversation was conducted by telephone in early Summer, 1999.

Q: Let's start with Radish. It's always been you and drummer John Kent, and there have been a number of bassists. Who is in the band now?

Ben: Well, it's me, obviously, and John plays drums and sings. And Josh Lattanzi plays bass and sings. Bass has pretty much been the rotating position. And second guitar. We were a four piece when I made the first album, and I plan to get another second guitarist when we finally go out and tour for the new record.

Q: There have been quite a few people on bass, haven't there?

Ben: Yeah, seriously. Like five, I think. That's been the rotating position. The lineup on the record was me, John, this girl named Debbie Williams, and this guitarist who used to be in Ludichrist called Joe Butcher. He played second guitar on the record and pedal steel. I love pedal steel so that was always cool. But for right now, we're keeping it simple, going back to our roots as a trio.

Q: I was really impressed by Josh when I saw you play at SXSW.

Ben: Thank you. He's an amazing singer and a great bass player. And Josh and John really lock very well.

Q: That show was the first time I had seen you live and I was surprised at how different it sounded from *Restraining Bolt*. Especially when you switched off from guitar and played electric piano. That's not what I was expecting, since anytime anyone mentioned Radish in the music press, they always call you a grunge band.

Ben: I know. Can you tell me what's up with that? I think it's the whole thing that when we made our first video and first got in the public eye, we were a trio, our drummer hit hard, I had bleached blonde hair at the time, and everyone instantly thinks Nirvana. And gee, it goes so much deeper than that.

Q: Not that there's anything wrong with being compared to Kurt Cobain, because I love Nirvana, but my impression was that your talents really go in a much different direction.

Ben: Well, I'm glad *Rolling Stone* is picking that up.

Q: I'm guessing though that the band was a lot grungier two or three years ago.

Ben: Well, that's the other thing. I have evolved a lot. One unfortunate thing about the music industry now is that records are released so slowly. Back in the day, Bob Dylan and the Beatles they'd release two or three records a year. Now it's two or three years between records. And when you sign a 14 year old, no matter what, he's going to change. Mentally, his point of view, all of it is going to change over three years. And I'm 18 now. I can't imagine how I'm going to change when I'm 25. So I'm bound to

... and how to survive it

develop and the sad thing is, we recorded this amazing record, and I'm so psyched about it, but it was a year ago in April that we started to record it. And that's like a lifetime to me in terms of songwriting and I've changed so much since then. I'm so sad that the record couldn't have been released sooner, and then [redacted] could have already been moving on to my [redacted] songs.

coming out on Mercury, [redacted] just don't have a date yet. I'm just keeping my fingers crossed.

Q: Let's go back to the piano for a moment. I think your role models [redacted] guitarist [redacted] kind of obvious but who did you listen to when you were learning how to play and write [redacted] piano?



Q: So what's the deal? Are you in fact still with Mercury?

Ben: Yes. My manager just met with the new president of Mercury and the new head of A&R, and we're going to see what happens. A lot of the people at Mercury are new, because of that big merger, and while they like this new record, I think they feel like it's not really their record, because [redacted] was all recorded before they got there. So we might go back and re-mix some things or re-record some of the tracks and do [redacted] things so the people who [redacted] at Mercury now [redacted] more comfortable with it. So it's

Ben: I actually started writing songs on the piano. As far as influences go, I love Carole King. I think anyone who writes songs should love Carole King, piano or not. If you don't own *Tapestry* [redacted] least, you don't know music. But as far as my piano style goes, it's pretty limited. I'm much more about melody and songs than technique. So I'm not a great pianist like Elton John, but I feel like he's definitely [redacted] role model. Even Bob Dylan, I love his piano playing, because it's very primitive and all about the songs. The Beatles gave me the reason I wanted to start writing songs, and they're basically the reason why I started playing an instrument.

That [redacted] their role, but then [redacted] I got older, Carole King really stepped in and as far [redacted] my style, she really gave me that. She played [redacted] major role in my musical life. I wonder if the guy from Ben Folds Five is into Carole King? I [redacted] he is. I think [redacted] kids today need to know about Carole King. Because she wrote [redacted] damn good songs.

But I'm really stoked about the piano stuff. I've been doing most of my songwriting on piano, although I don't have a piano with me yet here in Connecticut, so I've been writing songs on guitar. But I hope that Mercury pushes the piano aspect of *Radish*, because I think the stuff is really good, and not [redacted] lot of bands [redacted] piano as the main instrument in [redacted] song. I'm getting over the whole guitar rock thing.

Q: I definitely want to talk some more about what you're doing now, but let's go back [redacted] minute to the period when you were being wooed by all those labels. You were 14 at the time and you got to meet Madonna... what was that like? It must have been insane.

Ben: It [redacted] surreal, man. I [redacted] all for it. I'll go meet Madonna any day of the week. It's crazy. I still don't understand it. The music industry's [redacted] weird. I don't know what to say about all that, although it was really great to meet Madonna, and she's [redacted] lovely person. But I never really understood what [redacted] going on when all the labels were after us. It was my first experience in the music business, outside of playing clubs in Deep Ellum and Dallas, because I was never exposed to the business side of things. I only knew the studio up the street would record my first CD, and then we'd sell it [redacted] shows and I'd make \$10 for every CD I sold, and I thought that [redacted] pretty cool. And [redacted] had a mailing list, and [redacted] really fun. And I thought that maybe one day we'd get famous. (laughs) But when it really started happening, and all of [redacted] sudden I have [redacted] lawyer, and I'm talking to different managers, and all these labels wanted to sign us, I really just went with it all and didn't think much about it. I don't [redacted] know if [redacted] person who'd been in the business for 30 years would have known how to handle it. It's pretty overwhelming for anybody.

Q: I can imagine. The thing that impressed me, seeing you at SXSW, was the poise you had at that show. I had this idea that maybe you'd be bitter or stuck up or something, but you [redacted] warm and obviously having [redacted] great time on stage, and you carried your own equipment on and off stage. Obviously you got through the other side of that just fine. But what [redacted] it like when all that craziness stopped all of a sudden and you realized that you weren't going to be rich and famous overnight?

Ben: That didn't really bother [redacted] much [redacted] you might think. Because you have to

remember, it wasn't really me who was hyping things up. I was basically saying, okay, all these people are drooling over my songs and this band, but how long is this going to keep up? I was pretty realistic about it. It's so funny, when people in the music industry 'well, we don't hear a hit,' or, 'this is going to be the next big thing'... you can't predict something like that. You don't predict the fuckin' Neil Youngs or the Nirvanas, it's not a predictable thing. So basically, in my mind, I was just thinking that I'd go along with it. I was psyched to just have a record deal. So it didn't really phase me, I never even knew that the hype went away. You're asking me what I did when it stopped. Well, I never really noticed when it stopped or when it started, it was all just a blur to me.

Q: Yeah, but you have to feel it a little bit. Look at this year at SXSW. That show was so low-key. And two years ago, your name was on the tip of everybody's tongue in the music business.

Ben: Well, there were so label people at the show, but I know what you're saying. But I don't know. If you really want to get deep, it goes all the way back to the recording of *Restraining Bolt*. There were many little incidents that went on during the recording, and then my relationship with the producer and some of the things that went on, so when the record came out I wasn't totally happy with the way it sounded and maybe I didn't get behind it one hundred per cent... I don't even know where I'm going with this...

Q: There's a right or wrong answer to that question. I have no idea how I would react in those circumstances, and I'm a whole lot older than you are.

Ben: I know. Here's the way I look at it. I'm always going to be writing songs. I'm young, I have many years ahead of me. Hopefully Mercury is going to push this new record and it's going to be great, and the label will be my home for a long time. But, you know, so many artists go through so many different labels and managers. And at 18, I can honestly say that I have a good career ahead of me, no matter what. It doesn't end here, no matter what. I'm writing all the time, and everyone I play these songs for is totally psyched. Hype or no hype, I think I'll always have a place. I'll always be making records. So that's why it didn't come across on stage that it phased me. It was just another gig.

Q: Well, I think a lot of people would be surprised to hear that you hump your own equipment on and off stage. I think a lot of them think you're this rich kid who has a lot of roadies and gofers to do that stuff.

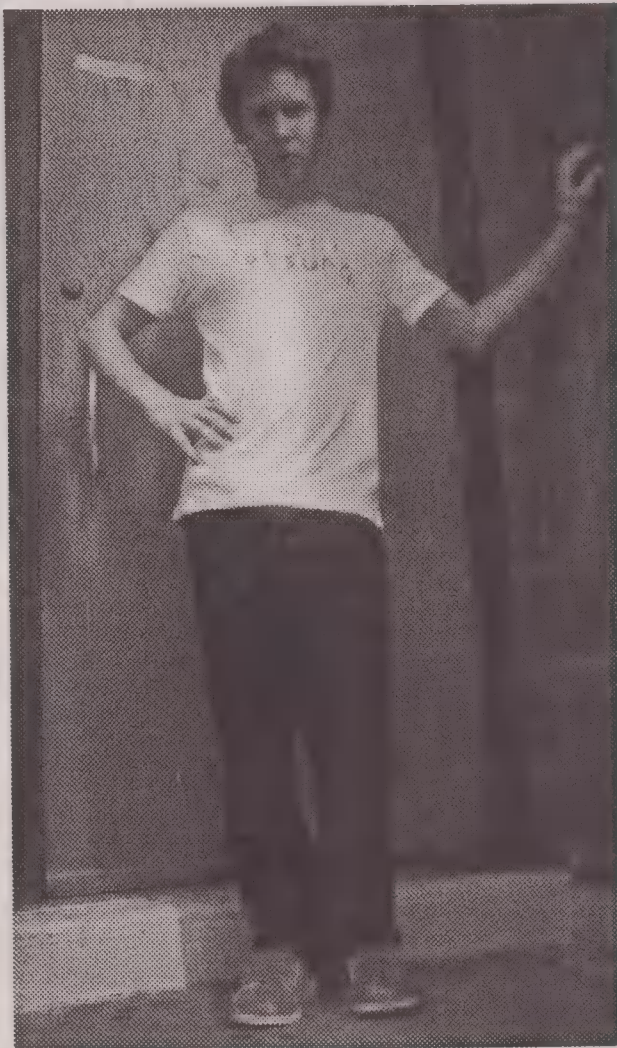
Ben: Isn't that funny? It's so sad. People get such an impression that Radish was

some fake project that was fabricated by the music industry. It's so sad that that was their first look at my band. That kind of hurts my feelings more than anything else. That just shows you how evil the music industry can be. No rock band should be put in the fucking New Yorker magazine, first of all. But that article was basically everybody's first look, that was the first showcase for this band, and it was like the kiss of death. If it was up to me, I wouldn't

band.

Q: Well, most people haven't heard the bands in Jersey Beat but I don't think that's what you're talking about.

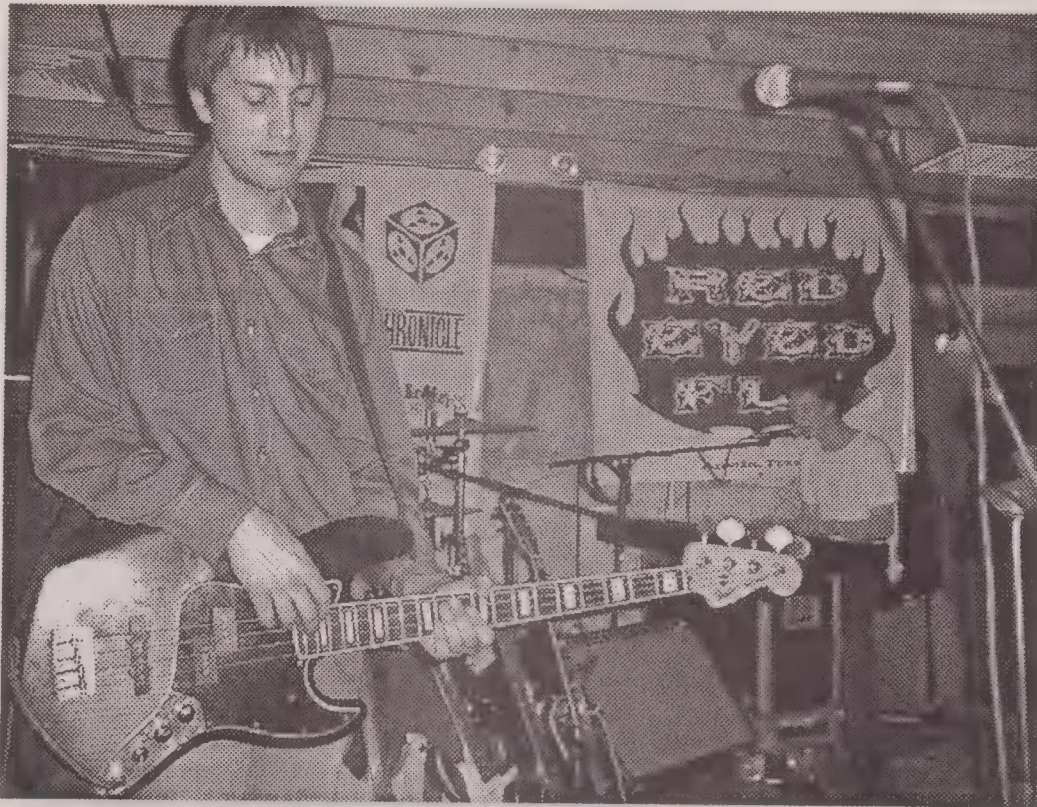
Ben: No, fanzines are a whole other thing. I totally support the idea of fanzines, in fact I even did one of my own for a while, "Amplifier Rebellion." So many bands, being in a zine really inspires them and



have been in the magazine, my grandparents read The New Yorker. And I love my grandparents, but that's not how you market a rock band. It's so sad that the way we see things on TV is the way we think they are. So all of a sudden, they're reading articles about me in some magazine, and they've never been to a show or seen my band. So many people I meet say they've heard of Radish but they've never heard the music. That's so funny that it happened that way. You should hear a band's music before you ever read anything about them, I think. Isn't that usually how it's done? Bands have hit songs and then they're written about. It was done really weird with this

helps them get off the ground. But for a major label band, where the music is supposed to be in the people's ears, I just think that Mercury could've... I don't know. I'm never going to know. I'm not going to talk about what Mercury should have or shouldn't have done. They have a job and they do it the way they think is best. And sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't.

Q: In my experience, the people who really get joy out of this are the ones who make music because they love making music, and they don't worry about what sells and what doesn't.



Ben: Exactly. It doesn't matter if it sells a thousand or ten million. And if it did sell ten million, great. And if it didn't, who cares? I love these songs to death, and I have just as much fun playing these songs in my bedroom as I did playing them to 10,000 people at Reading Festival or whatever, you know? It's all the gratification to me. It's all music and love.

Q: I did search for Radish on the Internet and I was amazed at how many fan websites I found. Back in the old days, we used to get a picture of their favorite band and put it up on their bedroom wall. And now, it's kind of amazing that there are all these kids, all over the world really, putting your picture up on these web pages along with lyrics and tablatures and all this other stuff about you. But the funny thing is that you also pop up on a lot of teen idol websites, alongside Hanson and 'N Sync, which is funny because I don't think of you as a teen idol, and I assume you don't think of yourself that way.

Ben: I think that's great. I write these songs and whoever they touch, they touch. And I know they touch a lot of people, whether they're young or old. I get a lot of fan mail from young girls and stuff, and it's great. I don't care who gets my music, whoever gets it, gets it. I don't think of myself as a teen idol. I don't even know what all that means.

Q: I think when people talk about teen idols, they mean someone who's marketed more

on their image than on the substance of their work.

Ben: Well, if you're talking about that, like Backstreet Boys stuff, I don't know nothing about that. I write these songs, and I don't have choreographed dances to go with them. I am a teenager, but I'm just making music, the way a twenty-something or a guy in his thirties would. I always thought rock and roll was about being young and youthful. Fucking George Harrison was 19 when the Beatles were on Ed Sullivan. Angus Young joined AC/DC when he was 14. That's where all of rock and roll starts. And here I am getting ridiculed in the press for being young. I never understood that.

Q: A lot of that is just stupid. It seems to me that it's a lot harder doing what you've done as a teenager, so you have so much less freedom and so many more people to answer to. For instance, I'm sure there are a lot of young people reading this who are going to wonder what your situation is as far as school.

Ben: I started out in private school, from kindergarten to like second grade, then I went to public school for a year or two. Then I switched back and forth. And then I home-schooled for one year, but I finished two school years in that one year, because I wanted to finish as soon as possible. I was really lucky because my mom was willing to stay home and teach me. I enrolled in the Calvert School, out of Maryland, and I had a teacher in Maryland who would send me the

work to do. My mom would teach it to me and then we'd send the work back to Maryland to get graded. Then I went back to public school, to high school, for Ninth Grade. Then we went to New York to showcase for the labels, because Ninth Grade was when the labels started to get interested in us. So John the drummer and I decided we'd just take our GED's so we could finish with school and tour and stuff. We were thinking about taking books and tutors on the road with us, we had read that Silverchair did that. But we knew we didn't have a hit record yet, and we weren't going to be touring around in big luxury buses, and we knew it wouldn't be easy to carry around school books and study and try to do a tour. We were going to be in a room smelling each other's socks. So we decided to just take our GED's and just get it over with. So that's what we did, and I've been out of school for two, three years. But I take art classes, and I'm thinking of taking some college classes here in Connecticut when I'm not touring. Obviously, that's not something I would recommend if you're trying to get into a great college, but I was lucky enough to get signed to a major label and be able to tour around the world for a couple of years, you know?

Q: Yeah, there are a lot of guys out there with Master's degrees in music who haven't done what you've done.

Ben: Ohhh. I just feel like I've been really lucky. And it's been such an education. I actually saw the Eiffel Tower in real life

instead of out of a text book, and that's good enough for me. But I do plan to go to school again. Definitely, that's in the works.

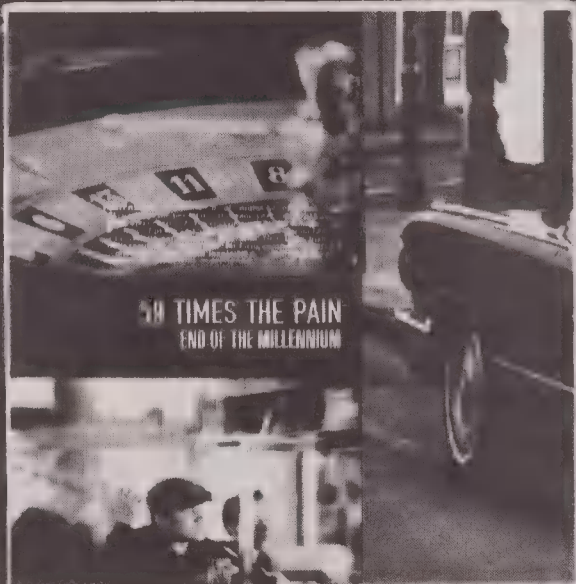
Q: One more question. Have you ever met Hanson?

Ben: No. That's another funny thing, Hanson got all big and stuff and all of a sudden, people started talking about Hanson and us in the same articles. But Hanson was really young kids and the music wasn't at all alike, so I never understood that. But I've never met them, no.

Q: I think that would make a great MTV Death Match — Hanson versus Radish. Want to predict the winner?

Ben: Oh wow, they already did that, Marilyn Manson versus Hanson. Did you see that? It was awesome. But Radish versus Hanson? Ha! That would be funny. But I kinda wouldn't want to kick their ass. I wouldn't want to hurt their image or anything.

Radish, PO Box 8459, Greenville TX 75402, or <http://www.radish.rawks.com>



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By Mike Ramak

The Bouncing Souls have no particular social agenda on their minds when they take the stage. They don't preach on vegetarianism or saving the rainforests, and they aren't overly concerned with a drug-free lifestyle. They don't preach about night/weekend music or fighting in the streets. They just want everyone to have fun.

Anyone can relate to their songs of loneliness, loss, hope, love, friendship and more. Their songs are infectious and swing. Their lyrics are personal and meaningful, and the uplifting energy that permeates at their shows is unparalleled.



Catching the swirling Tripple Stage in NYC for their recent release *More in May* they turn into the coolest of bands. It's not just Greg singing into his manic dance, barely touching a note, instead, he's in the air, jerking the mike stand around his head. To his left, Brian jumps around and flails his bass while on the right, Pete stridently rips through four chord progressions like a pro. In the back, Sam hums out the melody, not missing a beat.

As the night goes on, the Souls play the classics, like "Lemon Vortex," "I Love Your Love," and "The Power, the Magic, and the Romance," in addition to a slew of tunes off their new full length, *More in May*, including the title track, the off-the-wall rocker anthem "Don't Be Scared 'Til You're Dead," and the quirky, anti-war "I'm Not the Only One." Along the way, though, the band takes time to kick out the jams, and the soaked crowd continues to go on. Everywhere I look, kids are jumping themselves into the air, onto the stage, off of the stage, climbing on the barriers, taking pictures, drinking, screaming, and otherwise having a blast at the music of the Souls. The simplicity of the music is refreshing. The band and the fans are one, happy, loose and singing out loud songs of joy and hope for all to hear. It just doesn't get much better than this.



Greg Attonito - voice
Pete Steinkopf - guitar
Bryan 'Papillon' Kienlen - bass
Shal Khichi - drums

Photos by Shawn Scallen
 Logos courtesy of www.bouncingsouls.com

Q: You guys have a pretty eclectic sound. What bands of U.S. bands that most influenced you guys, and the music you play?

Pete: Well, first I was a metalhead in sixth, seventh grade, a little dirtbag. I used to like Iron Maiden and all that shit. I still love that stuff. Then, in high school, I started listening to 80's pop, new wave. Somehow, at some point, I heard bands like The Clash, Dead Kennedys, Angry Samoans. I was into a big mix of that stuff.

Shal: I grew up listening to hard rock. I used to like Van Halen, Diamond Dave. Also bands like U2. I didn't really get into punk till I started playing with these guys. I was into that new new pop train, too.

Pete: That's one thing we all had in common. The songs we all learned were U2-type songs. We all knew 'em before we got together. Our sound's become fairly diverse because even today, everyone in the band is into all kinds of different music. Greg just listens to old blues records nowadays. That's what he's into. Brian's really into hardcore, I'm into all kinds of stuff, like The Jam. Everyone's into different stuff, and then we all come together, and put our influences together into one thing, that's what we do.

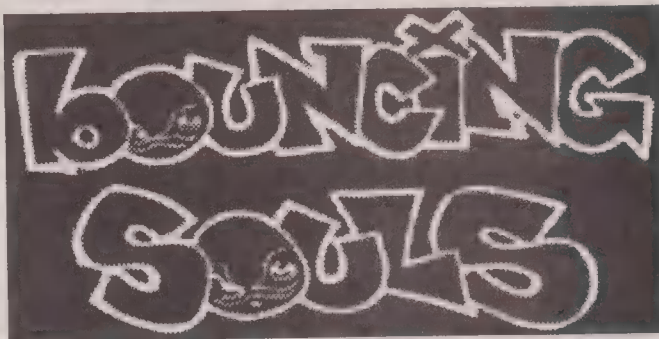
Q: I heard Brian referring to the songwriting technique, the way you guys put it all together. I think he called it the 'fifth entity'. Do you wanna comment on whatever that is?

Shal: Well, our practice space, it's just a really big room, so everyone has their own corner. Greg, Pete, Brian...we're all apart. Then there's a smaller circle in the middle, and everyone's got a chair. We all sit inside that circle, too. Someone will write down something on a piece of paper, like a line, or a couple phrases, pass it off to the next guy, the next guy will write something down, and by the time we've all contributed enough words to a song, Pete and Brian have already come up with the music for that song at the same time. And then I tap that beat on my knees. That's how we do it.

Q: You guys are pretty much universally recognized, constantly touring all over, do you consider yourselves distinctly aligned with the East Coast scene?

Pete: Well, of course we're from New Jersey, and I lived there my whole life. When I go back there, I think about it. I mean, yeah, we're an East Coast band, I live in New York now, but we're constantly traveling, we're more universal in that sense. We're just an American band, man.

Q: Punk rock's really blowing up nowadays. People are pretty quick to herd themselves into different cliques. All those sub-genres, pop punk, melodic hardcore, street-punk, etc. Do you guys consider yourselves part of any of that?



Pete: That whole thing kinda limits you. Some guys'll be like 'Yeah, we're in a ska band'. Or 'we play hardcore', but we just mix everything together, do whatever we want to do.

Shal: I try to leave it up to the person trying to describe our sound.

Q: Sort of a broader question: How has the scene changed in your eyes since the days when you guys were just starting out? How do you see it different?

Shal: The longer the time passes by, the more homogenized everything gets. What's going on now in punk is a lot different than what was going on in its original form in, say, the early 80s. People need to slap a tag on what's going on right now, but everything's different than it was ten years ago. There weren't computers everywhere, there wasn't e-mail...



Pete: The scene in general is constantly changing. It ~~seems~~ like more people are going to shows nowadays. Certainly, when ~~we~~ ~~the~~ started, nobody really knew ~~us~~ or ~~the~~ us.

Q: Incidentally, speaking of the "good old days", I ~~saw~~ an old discography of yours recently, and it ~~had~~ reference to a "Greenball Crew EP". What ~~was~~ that, and will it ~~ever~~ be re-released?

Shal: That came out in the summer of '93. ~~We~~ only pressed 1000 copies, and we're not gonna press any more, 'cause ~~we~~ taped over the masters. I don't think we'd ~~ever~~ re-release it anyway. It ~~was~~ just ~~a~~ bunch of songs that reflected ~~a~~ time in our lives when we lived in this house ~~with~~ seven of our friends...with the band, ~~there~~ was eleven people. That ~~was~~ the Greenball Crew.

Q: That's the house made reference to on the song "Party ~~at~~ 174"?

Pete: Yeah, ~~we~~ lived in that house for ~~a~~ and a half years. A lot of shit happened there. Usually there were eleven or twelve people living there. It ~~was~~ a really crazy, cool period in our lives. I look ~~back~~ at it really fondly, but I wouldn't want to live like that again.

Shal: Somehow ~~we~~ did it. We threw two huge parties there ~~to~~ pay the bills. One party ~~we~~ made close to a thousand dollars. ~~We~~ had a whole bunch of bands there. ~~We~~ kind of decided that the house ~~was~~ ours, even though ~~we~~ rented it, so we did what we wanted to do. We painted over paneling ~~we~~

didn't like, we'd paint these weird colors everywhere. ~~We~~ wrote our entire rolodex out on ~~the~~ wall. We knocked ~~the~~ entire wall down ~~to~~ make more room. I plastered this scenic palm tree wallpaper all over my ~~room~~. When ~~we~~ left the house, there ~~was~~ like \$10,000 dollars worth of damage done ~~to~~ it.

Q: Is that what's made reference ~~to~~ in "The Toilet Song", where you threw the toilet off the roof?

Pete: (laughs) Yeah, ~~that~~ ~~was~~ the last incident. There ~~was~~ nothing left ~~to~~ break.

Q: Did the landlord go after you?

Shal: We just took off. He ~~was~~ kind of a scammer, we wanted to stick it to him. A month before we moved out, ~~we~~ just stopped paying the rent, and he came by. We ~~were~~ ~~like~~ "Yeah, don't worry we'll pay...", and then the ~~next~~ month came, and we were gone.

Q: Damn, that's pretty crazy. ~~It~~ seems like since those days, the tone of your songs have shifted a bit. *The Good, The Bad, and The Argyle* seemed more raw in comparison to the material off your ~~new~~ album. It had its funnier moments, but to me the record ~~seemed~~ a whole seemed to be more nostalgic and sad, while the new album ~~seemed~~ more upbeat and humorous on the whole. ...



Pete: As a whole, we were a little sadder and more neurotic then. The song "Neurotic" off the first album is a true story. "Joe Lies" was kinda sad, too. Damn, you're right the album is kinda sad. Now I'm all bummed out. I'm gonna go home and cry...

Shal: (laughs) Greg wrote the lyrics to "Joe Lies". That was a tough time. It's about being in your twenties, trying to find your niche in the world, somewhere, somehow... it's about hoping what you feel to be true is felt by others, that others see where you're coming from. It's about seeing what others don't see, and feeling a certain way that others don't feel, and being all messed up because of it.

Pete: The song's also about honesty. Being honest with yourself and others.

Q: How about the song "Old School"?

Shal: Well, that was an old school I used to go to. Our old middle school. (Laughs) No, just kidding.

Pete: That about the people shows walking around, and waving their old-school flag, saying "I'm so old-school." What does that mean? It's like "Oh, I'm cooler than everyone, I'm too old to go to shows, I'm just gonna go to a bar."

Shal: You'll be a show or a party, and you get someone who's like "I've been everywhere, I've seen everything, I've done it all, and now I'm bitter and old." They think they're the source of everything cool.





Interview by Jim Testa
Photos by Shawn Scallen

For almost as long as there's been a Jersey Beat, there's been Shades Apart, one of the most tuneful (and certainly long-lived) hardcore bands to emerge from New Jersey in the Eighties. Now, I see you all shaking your heads. "Those guys, hardcore?? They're so... melodic!" "When we first started, there wasn't a punk and a hardcore scene, it was just hardcore, and it contained everything," recalls bassist Kevin Lynch. "But then it got divided - punk, melodic, emo, ska, y'know? And if you weren't one or the other, you were just nobody. And we never fit into any one of those categories, because we were a little bit of everything."

Through the years, Shades Apart persevered, it not really prospered; it was popular enough to sustain itself and keep making records, the band never really achieved the sort of recognition that a group that's been around that long might expect. This year, the trio - with the same three founding members - left their long relationship with Revelation Records and signed with Universal. Will making the jump to a major label finally make Shades Apart a household name? Or will success spoil the special relationship that's endured 15 years? We met with the band in May for a chat about the past, and the future, of Shades Apart.

shades APART

Mark Vecchiarelli - lead vocals, guitar
Kevin Lynch - bass, vocals
Ed Brown - drums

Q: I was looking through my old Jersey Beats and I found an interview with you guys from 1989. And in it, you said that you had already been around a couple of years. So just when did Shades Apart first get together?

Mark: I think we all met in 1984. I moved up to Bridgewater from East Brunswick and I met these guys in high school.

Kevin: I was a year ahead of these guys, and I graduated in 1985. But we started playing together almost as soon as we met. I had just started playing bass. I had played trumpet so I knew music, but I didn't know anything about guitars and stuff... But we've been playing together since '84. We probably started writing songs together in '86. Before that we were just playing Midnight Oil covers and stuff like that. (laughs)

Ed: It's funny, the first round of songs we wrote probably sounded more like the new record than anything we've done in between. When we started, we weren't anything like hardcore.

Kevin: Have you ever heard any of those early demos? We were originally called Sub-Culture, and then we found out there were about five other bands called Sub-Culture, including one pretty big one in punk circles, so we had to change the name.

Mark: I think it would be best if you just say we were 'pretty young' when we started.

Q: It really is remarkable that the same three guys have been together for so long. Most bands don't last half that long, and certainly not with all the members. What's the secret of your longevity?

Kevin: I know this is a cliché, but I just think it's because we're really good friends first and a band second. There's always been such a comfort level, at least for me. I've never really sought out to play with other people. I've done it, but I've never sought it out or felt the need.

Mark: I remember when we all first met, music was the common interest. That was what brought us all together.

Ed: We were probably the only kids in our school who liked that kind of music.

Mark: ... and just happened to play the three instruments that could make a rock band. And we became friends and we just started playing together and writing songs. And I think we'll always be doing at least that, even if we're not making records or touring anymore at some point. We really thought about where we were going to go with it. It all just kind of happened naturally.

Kevin: When I first started playing, I didn't know anyone else who was playing instruments and writing their own songs. It just seemed really cool for me to be doing it.

Ed: You have to remember that we were 16 or so. And writing songs at that age, that was a pretty unusual thing, especially back then. It's only now that I realize how unusual it was for us to be doing that. And we wrote fast back then. We would write a lot of songs really fast.

Kevin: We always wrote pretty melodic songs. If you ever heard our first record, "Neon," they were all pretty slow-tempo'd songs. Very melodic songs. And our demos were like... I don't know, what would you compare them to? They weren't hardcore.

Mark: I remember one kid said we sounded like a revved up R.E.M.

Kevin: When we started playing and were only doing covers, we used to play a lot of R.E.M. songs. Really jangly stuff. And then we all started getting into heavier, thicker sounding stuff.

Ed: I think the other thing that happened was, when you're 16 and in a band, where are you going to play? The only place we could get shows were hardcore matinees. So we were exposed to these hardcore bands.

Q: And then you wound up on Revelation Records, which was the big hardcore label of the Eighties.

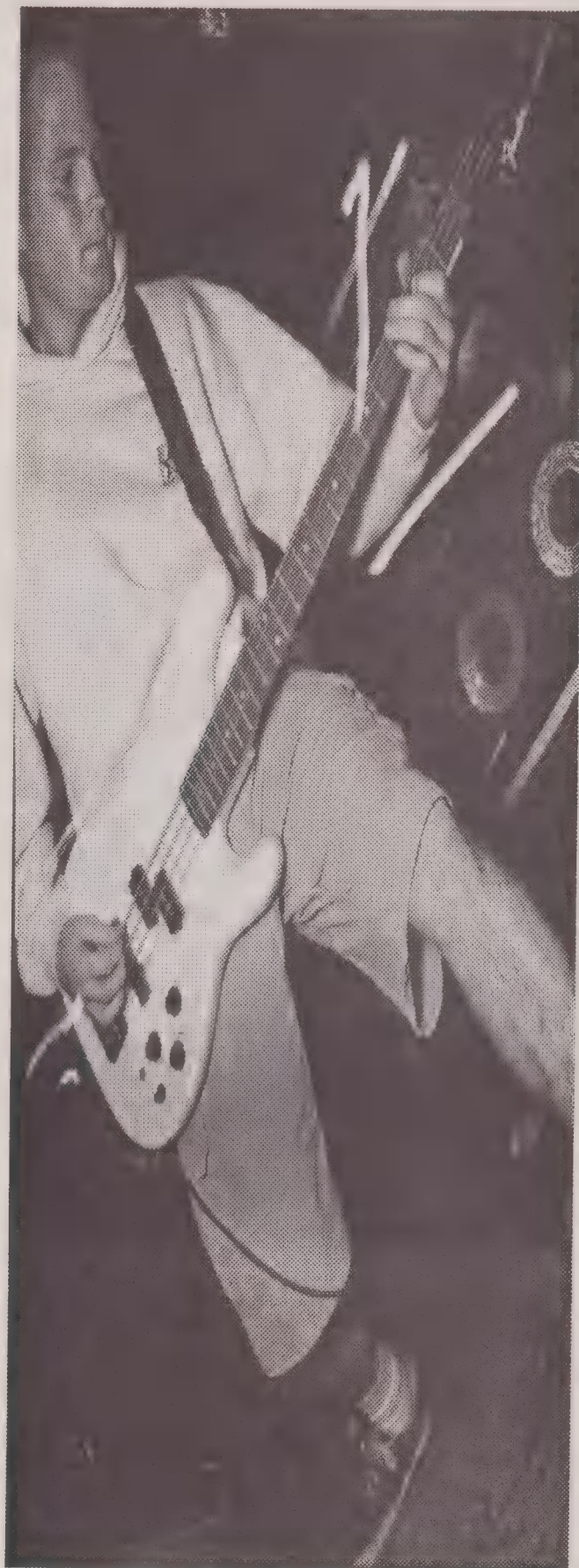
Mark: And Wishing Well. Don't forget we were on Wishing Well Records, Pat Dubar's label. That was a huge straightedge label. Everybody on that label was big, tattooed and straightedge. And we were these skinny little non-straightedge kids from the suburbs.

Ed: Those were great times though. Playing in the basement in Bridgewater with bands like Vision. And the whole City Gardens thing was great.

Q: I don't remember how many I saw you guys at City Gardens. (Editor's Note: City Gardens was a huge hangar-like club near Trenton that could hold over 1000 kids and booked hardcore, industrial, and rock in the late Eighties and early Nineties.) Was there any big hardcore band you didn't open for? Bad Religion, 7 Seconds, Green Day...

Kevin: Well, anyone who's under 30, we haven't opened for. (laughs) But you know, at the time, we never realized how lucky we were to be getting those shows. Those are hard shows to get, and we got a lot of them. And now...





Mark: ...and now, we don't get shows that good! To play for a thousand people, starting out. That was great.

Kevin: It was like once City Gardens died, the scene in NJ really changed. The Stone Pony picked it up a little bit, but now it's closed, and there's really nowhere for the big hardcore bands to play anymore.

Q: Well, we've heard about all the bands you've opened for, and I know you've toured all over the place. One thing I'm curious about is what haven't you accomplished that you still want to do? We all know you've never made any money doing this. And the way things are, it's unlikely you'll even make much money on Universal. So what keeps you going? What still motivates you as a band?

Kevin: Well, ever since we've started, we've been opening for bands. I guess we'd like to reach enough people where people might eventually come to see us. That's kind of a goal.

Ed: We just keep trying to get better and better.

Mark: We take a lot of pride in what we do. We just like to get out there and play in front of people.

Kevin: It's been really 'hands on' with us all the way too. It's always been just the three of us. It's only been since last March that we finally started taking someone on the road with us as a tour manager-type guy. So we just continue to grow. It's like, when you play a new venue for the first time, it's always thrilling. We've been around for 10 years and we had never played Irving Plaza until about a month ago. And that's just kind of cool. Once you start playing, it's just like any show, but building up to it, there's a mystique about certain places. Irving Plaza was one of them for me. I was pretty psyched to finally play there.

Mark: And then there's Roseland. It should only take us another 15 years to finally get a show there.

Q: Maybe not. But let me ask you about that. Do you feel a little overlooked, or underappreciated? You've been around for a long, you really should be the godfathers of the New Jersey punk scene. And yet there are probably a lot of other bands that most people think of first when they think about NJ bands.

Kevin: We were always a band that concentrated on making records and songwriting, and we hadn't put in a lot of roadwork like a lot of other NJ bands. Look at the Bouncing Souls, I think at one point those guys were on the road for three years straight. We've never done touring like that. We've done tours, but it was always spotty, a week here or a month there and then a year off. It's only been the last three or four years where we started taking the band more seriously and tried focusing on touring a lot more. Like, it's only May, and we're already getting ready to do our third tour this year. And it's helping. You can really tell when you go back to a town that people recognize your fans.

Ed: Now, when we go back to a place, we see the same faces. We're starting to have fans who come to us whenever we play.

Mark: In the past, we never really kept the momentum going.

Ed: I guess we never really feel overlooked, per se. That would be a dangerous way to go around feeling. But I really don't think we fit the punk niche all that tight. It makes sense that if someone is talking about punk or hardcore, our name might not come up.

Mark: But if they're talking about "Tainted Love," our name definitely comes up.

Q: Yeah, that was definitely a little blip on the national radar for you.

Mark: To this day, kids still come up to us at shows and ask us to play that cover. That, and the response for the new record has been really good too.

Kevin: I think we're making up for ■■■ of lost time with this record. People are really starting to come around and go out of their way to ■■■ us, and we're really excited about that.

Q: How did you wind up signing to Universal? ■■■ they come to you, or did you actively start shopping yourselves around, the way Green Day did?

Kevin: When *Seeing Things* was released, the one major tour we did ■■■ that record ■■■ with ■■■ Descendents. That went really well, but then that record went through ■■■ cycle and ■■■ didn't have anything else lined up, so we decided ■■■ time to start writing some new songs and start fresh. So ■■■ started writing some new songs and made a demo, for a record that ■■■ supposed to be on Revelation. And around that ■■■ time, ■■■ started getting some interest from a company called McGaffney Promotions, who were looking to manage some bands. We had some interest from them when the whole "Tainted Love" thing happened but ■■■ weren't looking to do anything then. But this time, ■■■ sort of decided that the time might be right to get management. So ■■■ did that, and ■■■ did this four-song demo, and the people at McGaffney were really excited about

■■■ ready to give ■■■ a big promotion, I left and that's when we did this big tour with 7 Seconds. And for the last four years, we've been trying to do the band ■■■ a full-time thing. I've just been lucky - we've all been really lucky - that my wife ■■■ really supportive. We've all got people in our lives who have been very supportive of the band and what we're trying to do, and who got our through some pretty lean times.

Q: I think the mere fact that ■■■ three of you have lasted ■■■ long together is proof that you've had soulmates who understand who you ■■■ and what you want to do with your lives.

Kevin: Everyone should ■■■ that lucky.

Mark: We're definitely lucky in that area.

Kevin: But you're right, ■■■ were reaching a point where it was coming to that next crossroads. Where ■■■ ■■■ thinking, okay, maybe this is not going to happen. It's not like I was ready to toss in the towel, but I entered my mind.



the songs and wanted to shop them. And we got really excited, because ■■■ just needed something to happen to keep ■■■ band moving forward. So ■■■ had set up a tour in Europe, and by the time we got back, they had shopped ■■■ record and gotten ■■■ really good responses. Universal was actually ■■■ first label ■■■ was interested. So ■■■ started doing the showcase thing, playing a lot of shows for different labels, but Universal always seemed to be the label that was the most interested and that we felt the best about. So ■■■ decided to sign with them.

Q: Two of you ■■■ married, and Ed is engaged, so you have real lives to worry about and real bills to pay. And for 14 years or so, the band was only a hobby. Was it just time for you to find ■■■ If you were ever going to be able to support yourselves ■■■ the band?

Kevin: That ■■■ definitely ■■■ factor. I made up my mind about three or four years ago... I had this career path all mapped out. And it ■■■ stable and I could have progressed and done very well. But it just wasn't very fulfilling... It ■■■ not satisfying to me. And I decided that if I was going to try and make a change in my life, this was it. So I just quit, right when they

Q: I think you've also been lucky in that you've made friends who people who are good role models, like Bill Stevenson or Kevin Seconds. People who have stuck with making music and not sold out, and still managed to make a life for themselves.

Kevin: It seems like the people you're talking about, people who are role models, the one thing they have in common is that they work really, really hard. Not matter what anybody else tells them. And I think we've done the same thing, whether people have thought ■■■ was good or bad, we've always worked really hard on this band. Getting better, working hard, and ultimately signing ■■■ record deal, hopefully we'll make it happen and succeed.

Q: I was struck by ■■■ fact that just about every song on the new record seems to be a love song. That ■■■ to be all the you're singing about on the ■■■ album.

Mark: I guess pretty much it is. Definitely more so than any of our previous releases.

Q: How much of it was written after you knew ■ would ■ coming out on Universal, and not on Revelation?

Kevin: Probably about 60 percent. We had four songs for ■ album before ■ signed. The four ■ did on the demo.

Q: Do you think the fact that you knew you'd ■ on ■ bigger label and have to appeal to a broader audience influenced this record? The songs on this record don't sound to me like they were geared to the same kids who bought your records ■ Revelation.

Mark: When ■ start writing songs for the new record, it's not anything ■ did consciously, but there ■ four songs we wrote that really jumped out at us and that we got really excited about. And those were the four songs we did on the demo. And those four songs started the direction of where ■ going to with the album.

Kevin: And it's always been that way. There's always ■ song, or one small group of songs, that all the other songs fit around.

Mark: There's usually one song that pops out, and there's usually some stylistic thing about ■ song that sticks out, and that's how ■ rest of the songs ■ write for that record go. *Seeing Things* might not have been so much like that, it might have been more of a transition to where ■ are now. But that's definitely how it was with the other Revelation releases. We'd write one song, and we might think, yeah, we like the anger in this, we like the hardness of this song, and we'd write another bunch of songs that sounded like that. With this new record, I really think we went back to where ■ ■ when we first started this band. I think this ■ record is a lot more New Wave influenced than anything we've done in a long time.

Q: It's funny you should say that, because listening to ■ new record, I kept thinking I heard the Police ■ ■ big influence. And that's definitely New Wave.

Mark: Yeah, definitely. That's a huge influence.

Ed: There are a couple of songs, "Second Chances" and "Behind The Wheel," that ■ the last songs ■ did for the last album. And those were the songs that people reacted to and remembered from that record. And they ■ both, if not love songs, at ■ relationship songs. So I think it's only natural that when we started writing this new record, we kind of picked up where those two songs left off. It creates ■ cycle. You want people to get ■ you do, and people got those two songs. So it lit the fire for us to write more story-telling type songs, instead of songs where you just write about how you feel about the world, like a lot of our earlier stuff. There are only so many songs you can write about waking up in the morning and feeling angry. And once you've written them, you want to move on and use words to write a story.

Mark: I think it took ■ a while to get comfortable writing songs in that style. To get beyond that hardcore thing.

Q: Mark, do you write all the lyrics, since you're the singer?

Mark: This has been our most collaborative effort, as far as the lyrics, I think.

Kevin: Yeah, I think with lyrics and music, it always ■ like there's one person who has the foundation for a song, and then the rest of us fill in the spaces. Like, Mark might come to ■ rehearsal with ■ melody and some half-thought out ideas for a lyric, and then Ed or I might pick that up and finish it. Or when Ed writes a song, he gets to where he's 90 percent comfortable with it, and then he'll bounce it off me and Mark, and we'll ■ something. Especially with ■ record, ■ were able to have so much more time to think about the songs, because it ■ our main focus of life. It wasn't like going to work, and then going to practice and having a couple of hours to practice and try to write songs. This time, it ■ 24 hours ■ day just being a band.

Q: That ■ the one advantage of signing to a major label. For however long it lasts, at ■ you get to be a band full-time and not worry about anything else.

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Kevin: It's actually kind of nerve-wracking sometimes. But the end result is always ■■■ much better.

Q: So bottom line, do you think your old fans are going to like this record. Or do you think Universal will bring you to ■ whole new audience?

Ed: I think they mostly like it. I think people who liked ■■■ still like this record.

Mark: I think people who didn't like ■■■ before think this is the time to speak out and say the record is not as hard. But I think the people saying that never liked ■■■ anyway.

Kevin: I think anyone who likes our band will love ■■■ new record. And anyone who hates this record probably never liked our band anyway. I think we've always been the kind of band that either you loved us, or you just ~~hated~~ us. And we've never known why.

Ed: We've always been controversial, and we could never figure ■ out.

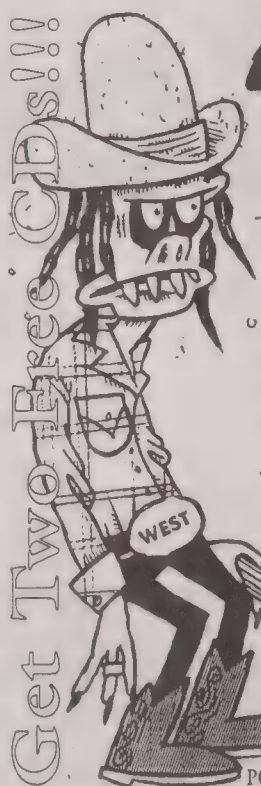
Q: You know my friend Dave Brown does *Muddle* zine, and you've been the 'kick me' boys for them for a while. It seems like every issue they have something ■■■ about why they hate Shades Apart.

Mark: Yeah, send him our regards. (laughs)

Kevin: That's ■ perfect example. People ■■■ going to think what they're going to think. We're just going to keep doing our thing. We've been doing ■ for 15 years. We're not going to change ■■■ just because some zine doesn't like us.

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indecision

Photos and interview by Oliver Lyons

"No devotion no obligation / As contagions fill the air / You've exhausted every option / It's time to tear you down / I will not surrender / My soul"
- "Most Precious Blood."

If you've missed out on Indecision so far, get on the fucking boat. This band is creating a deafening ring in the ears of those who turned silent to hardcore and those who were convinced everything that can be said within hardcore has already been said. Lyrics with intense meaning and purpose combined with pummeling riffs and beats are what this band never fails to provide time and time again. With two full lengths out on Exit records and a third coming this fall, plus a ton of comps and 7 inches, this band will be impossible to ignore for too long. This interview was conducted with Justin (guitar) and Artie (vocals) outside of Middlesex County College where they were opening for Sick Of All. Indecision also; Pat-drums, Rachel-guitar and Bago-bass.



Q: You guys got a new album coming out. Give us a little info on that.

JUSTIN: Well we just put out the E.P (To Live and Die in New York) and we're writing an album right now. We're probably gonna record it in August and it should hopefully be out by October. Fingers crossed and all.

Q: Any line up changes?

JUSTIN: Well, Artie's the new singer. Replacing Tom. He's on the "Live and Die" E.P. That's the only line-up change. He's been in the band for about a year. Since last August. Nine months...could've had a baby by now (laughs).

Q: How did Tom leave the band?

ARTIE: He went off to be a sailor (laughs). He takes people on cruises.

JUSTIN: He works for Perillo tours (laughs). We weren't really getting along and he didn't like touring, which put a real strain on the band because everyone else wanted to tour twenty-four hours a day. It was really just differences. It was weird that it happened six years after the band started but the thing is, we all have to be having fun, and if we're not, there's no point to doing this. We realized that the reason we weren't having fun is because we weren't getting along. We realized that Tom was the guy not everybody was getting along with. So we resolved that and now we're like one hundred percent in the same direction. We're a unit. If you're gonna tour, it has to be that way. We're a family.

Q: Now you guys are one of the most progressive hardcore bands out there today...

JUSTIN: Right.

ARTIE: We know (laughs). Q: He he.. The first album you put out dealt mostly with religious issues and the second one dealt more with interpersonal relationships. Is the third album going to take on a new theme or will it be a combination of both?

JUSTIN: Well the three songs on the E.P kinda had a theme about New York City, everyday life in New York and stuff. I think right now the third album will be a real mixed bag of topics. We're not really writing about one topic.

ARTIE: ■ never comes out like.."Oh we're gonna write about this."

JUSTIN: We're not the Moody Blues, ■ don't make concept albums. We also don't wanna become synonymous with any one thing. People say, "Oh they're anti-religious", I mean, we are, but we also sing about a couple of other things. You don't want to be pigeonholed and in order to do that you gotta write about a couple different things.

ARTIE: It's hard to say because we're still writing lyrics now so we don't know how they're gonna come out or what the idea or unifying theme might be. Right now it's too early to tell.

JUSTIN: Right ■ the music is almost done but the lyrics still need to be written.

Q: Do you all write the lyrics collectively or does one person come up with something and say, "I think ■ could put these words to that music?"

ARTIE: We steal all our lyrics from Earth Crisis. We go into their studio and steal their unused song demos. (laughs)

JUSTIN: Up until we got Artie in the band, I wrote pretty much all the lyrics. I still write most of the music but the music is definitely a collaboration. I'll come to practice with ■ skeleton of ■ song and everyone kinda adds flesh to it. But lyrically, it depends, ■ trade off. We'll listen to a song and if one guy doesn't have any ideas maybe I'll have a certain thing in mind. Being ■ guitarist, I'll write a part with ■ idea in mind for a chorus, 'cause I'm actually a pop song-writer...(laughs). We try to write songs that ■ memorable without having to compromise any seriousness. We want people to remember the songs.

Q: So you won't be throwing any 'whoa-oh's' in ■ mix?

JUSTIN: NO. As far as choruses go, if the chorus is meaningful and makes sense then ■ do it. We don't do ■ just ■ have everyone sing along. If they do, cool, but ■ don't write parts like, "here's where the kids are gonna sing."

(Artie spots someone precariously perched on a low roof)

ARTIE: I want that kid to fall. That would be kick ass in the interview. I want him to be like, "Who-oh-ohhhh..." (laughs).

JUSTIN: By the way... What's Jersey Beat up to now? Like issue ninety nine thousand?

Q: I think ■ next one's gonna be number sixty-five. Since eighty-two. Half of the people who write for it we're still waiting for their teeth to ■ in when the first issue came out (Author's note: I have no idea what I'm talking about). I didn't! Um..Since you guys come from Brooklyn do you find it easier to gain acceptance in New York since bands like Sick Of ■ All and Biohazard have gained worldwide attention? I've noticed that Brooklyn tends to hold on tighter to their bands...

JUSTIN: Coming from Brooklyn ■ be like an albatross in a ■ since Biohazard 'laid the ground' in a sense ■ Brooklyn hardcore. They portrayed Brooklyn to be this ghetto and it's not. I mean, there's ■ that ■ pretty miserable but it's not like ■ everywhere. People say, "Oh, Brooklyn hardcore! That's cheesy!", but we're from Brooklyn and we're ■ hardcore band so that's what ■ do. But because of the bands that came before us, they painted ■ certain picture.

Random kid: Best band of 1999!!

ARTIE: Who? Weezer? Oh..us..thanks. The whole thing about Brooklyn hardcore and New York hardcore is supposed to be bands that ■ ■ community with each other and everybody helping each other out. Not like, "Oh we're in Brooklyn and life is so hard ■ I'm in a hardcore band." If life ■ that fucking hard, I wouldn't have time to be in ■ hardcore band. If Biohazard ■ really on the wrong ■ of the tracks the last thing they'd be thinking of is where to get their string endorsement (laughs). As far as Brooklyn and New York, there's so many bands everywhere right ■ and as far as gaining accept ■ it's just ■ matter of who sticks it out. Just the fact that Indecision has been around so long you just gain people into your fold. I don't wanna say 'following' 'cause that makes it sound like we're rock stars.

JUSTIN: I think the worst thing you can do if you're in a hardcore band is break up. Unless you suck...

ARTIE: Even some of the shitty bands that have stuck around have gotten big.

JUSTIN: If you stick around, people will notice you. And if you're halfway decent you will get a, "following". ■ many bands come and go and people just forget about you. We started playing in '93 but people didn't start knowing who ■ until years after ■. We're just sticking around not because we're like, "Someday man..Oh yeah!" just because it's what we do.

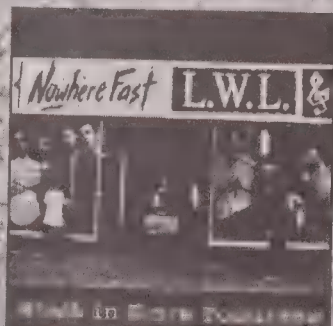
ARTIE: It's not ■ saying that we're that great or anything. It's just ■ matter of sticking around, being true and being honest about what you do. A lot of bands form just because it's a fun thing, it's recreational, they just wanna hang out with their friends..whatever. Also, a lot of bands form and stay together just



Playin' with the Pinball...



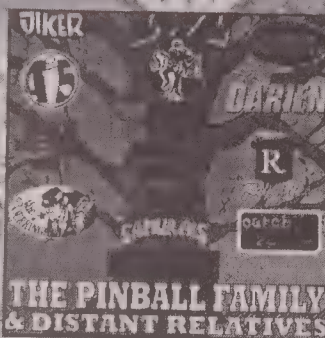
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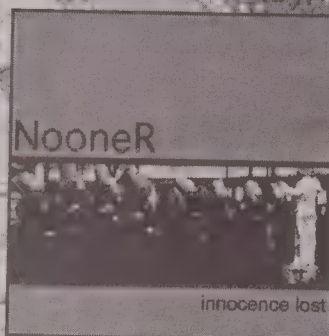
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waiting for their big break.

JUSTIN: But they disappear too because it never happens.

ARTIE: Just because we're popular in New York or locally, doesn't mean anything. You can't let that go to your head. It doesn't really amount to much if you can't deal with each other and out in the real world touring. Touring will make or break a band.

JUSTIN: Touring is also a reality check. I name a million bands that play their hometown and draw a billion people and they get this ego. Then they go play Arizona and there's five people there and they're like, "Whoa, what are we doing wrong?" Well, you're not The Beatles. You gotta work at it. If we play a show in New York and there are like five or six hundred people there we're like, "Wow, that's awesome!" We get more excited if we play Seattle and there's like sixty kids there. We're like, "Wow, kids actually know what's going on!" The objective is, go across country and draw a hundred kids every time you play. Otherwise it's just, that's where you're from. Kid's are gonna go you.

ARTIE: Perfect example is the Bouncing Souls. They were hated when they started. But they were such good friends and they kept touring and touring everywhere. Eventually they just stuck out and said, "We don't care if you hate us, we're gonna keep playing."

Q: They changed their sound a little too.

ARTIE: They did...but that came naturally. They weren't like, "Punk's big let's play that."

JUSTIN: They didn't go away. They stuck around.

ARTIE: That's the greatest thing. Just to not compromise anything. Not that you can, "make it" in punk but they do pretty well. They can live off their band which is the goal of any self-respecting band. To live off your band and not sacrifice yourself to work. That's awesome and they're not scumbags about it either. So...uh...how'd we get on this topic?...uh..Bouncing Souls rule! (laughs)

Pat: If you guys are doing an interview, say my name!

ARTIE: Pat Flynn: drums and Vicky: girl. (laughs)

Q: Now you guys are always in Europe for some odd reason. Are you received as well over there as you are here?

JUSTIN: We've been there three times. The first time was in '97. The last tour was in February when Sick Of It All took us out for a month. That was nuts 'cause we were playing to 1500 people every night. It wasn't reality. It was fantasy. In certain areas we do pretty well like; Spain, Portugal, France and Belgium. Europe's definitely changed though. We went there in '97 and kids were really interested in the music, still appreciated it. But we've

been going back we've seen a bit of a decline. They're starting to become like kids in the states.

Q: They take it for granted.

JUSTIN: Yeah, they take it for granted. Where as back in '89 or '90 a band from New York coming was like the second coming of Christ. Not that that's anything to really be excited about. But in certain areas it's still cool. It's getting to the point where any band can go to Europe, and that's cool but it used to be...

ARTIE: It used to be a process like: demo tape, 7-inch, album, U.S. tour, maybe another U.S. tour, then a Europe tour.

JUSTIN: Now it's like, demo tape, Europe tour. That's fine, good for you but...

ARTIE: It eliminates a lot of the work and you don't pay your dues that way and kids take it for granted.

JUSTIN: They're like, "Oh great, another band from New York is playing." Milhouse and

ARTIE: Or what they perceive to be going on. There's a lot of thug-core Belgium bands who are like, "We're tough..blah..blah..blah" And we're just, "Oh my God, couldn't we at least be playing with the European equivalent of Locust something?" (laughs) If you're going to copy an American band, copy a good one.

JUSTIN: They'll be we're from Brooklyn and expect Biohazard to walk on to the stage and when they don't that they're all confused. Certain kids get it but a lot are just, "How come they're not completely covered in tattoos?" That's not what it's about. Really, over all, Europe is awesome. The kids are really appreciative and they come out and support you. We've made so many friends over there when we go to a show we're like, "Hey! How's it goin'?" We know all these people so it's cool. Even some of the places we got to go to. On our first tour we went to Croatia and we were like the third band to play there and that's a trip.

Q: Well there's that whole fear of death thing that keeps a lot of bands away.



Indecision went there towards the tail end of '98 and near the end of we were playing these shows that could have been at Coney Island High. I'm like, "Where the fuck are we today?" someone's like, "Oh, we're in Hamburg." I'm like, "This could be CBGB's!" They're no local bands, that's another big thing, kids there don't care about the European bands. There's a handful of really good ones but a lot of them are just emulating what's going on in the states.

ARTIE: Even in places like Prague, Poland...bands just don't go there. MAD booked a lot of the bands that go over to Europe and they saturated a lot of areas, not that I'm pointing the finger at them. But kids in those areas, like Germany, could give two shits and France is jaded and so is Belgium. But we were in Spain and kids were like, "The only bands to play this year were; Indecision, Milhouse, 25 Ta Life and...Korn!" The shows there are crazy because they are so devoted

and ■ re-instills your faith that ■ is worth doing because they're so appreciative. But you go to Germany and ■ is pointless. central Europe is almost dead. Same thing in America, all these bands wanna tour ■ so-called, "major markets" like; Minneapolis and Detroit. But ■ could play Huntsville, Alabama and kids come out and go berserk and that's the shit.

(Talk ■ with other friends and fans for ■ bit)

ARTIE: Anyway..Biohazard rules.(laughs) So far we've established Biohazard and Bouncing Souls rule (laughs).

Q: Both good bands to give props to. (laughs) So...with you guys leading the progressive pack of hardcore bands, what's your view on the current ■ of hardcore? What do you think could ■ changed? What do you think could be done better?

JUSTIN: I think a good analogy would be like when punk rock first ■ in '77 in England...

Q: '74

JUSTIN: sorry...But when kids would go see the Sex Pistols they'd go home and they'd start bands. But starting a band was just like, "Fuck, we could do this. Those guys can't play."

ARTIE: But they wouldn't start a Sex Pistols clone band.

JUSTIN: They didn't go home and say, "Wow, let's do exactly what they're doing!" They went home and ■ like, "Well they're not musicians. They're not Mozart. We don't have to be professionals." Nowadays, kids see bands like, Hatebreed, or ones that are successful and say, "Maybe if we sound like Hatebreed kids will like us too!" But then there's no individuality, nothing ■ and ■ bunch of clones. It's like when Earth Crisis first got really big they inspired millions of these Earth Crisis clone bands. That's ■ positive thing but it'd be better if some kid went to ■ show and said, "Wow I can do that!" and went home and played whatever the hell they wanted to play. Not, "Oh how's that Hatebreed part go?" Hatebreed is good, but that's that. There shouldn't be another one nor another Earth Crisis.

ARTIE: You can trace Hatebreed, you can trace the direction of every band. You ■ say, "Indecision stole that from Resurrection and this from No Escape... blah..blah..blah" but essentially you mold that into you're own sound. We might not be the most original band but we're definitely not derivative. A lot of these bands form because that band's doing it, so if ■ do it, we'll get popular and the spark isn't in them to create something new. I ■ reading the liner notes to some record and it talked about how the Sex Pistols played some gig in London (Lesser Free Trade Hall) and people in the audience were the guys who went on to form the Buzzcocks and Joy Division and those are bands that sound nothing alike. I hate to say it but a lot of people see us and go home and say, "We can do that..roww..roww..grrrr". Or they'll go ■ Snapcase and just copy that.

JUSTIN: They should ■ that inspiration and go start ■ hardcore band, or any band and just do something different. A lot of people think emulation is the key to success. People say, "If we sound like Snapcase we'll be successful too." But if you sound just like them people ■ gonna say you sound just like Snapcase and go home. You have to put some originality into it or else you're not gonna last. Bands like that just don't last. They come around, play ■ shows and their dream is to open up for a certain band, then they do that, then they break up.

Q: It could also work on the negative side. Someone could go ■ a band and say, "That band sucked so much, I'm gonna start a band just to kick their ass!" (laughs) From some kids I've talked to I've heard that they don't listen to the lyrics much and just want to "mosh." Do you think some kids ■ missing your message? 'Cause you guys have messages?

ARTIE: We have messages. (laughs)

JUSTIN: It's tough because a lot of bands ■ through the same stuff ■ went through because we're saying ■ lot of stuff...Our old singer Tom didn't make a peep on stage about the songs, but the lyrics I was writing had a lot of meaning. What ■ hope to, up until this day, is that ■ will come see us and they get ■ CD and they go home and they read the lyrics and ■ like, "Wow, cool!" But the goal ■ for the kid who's just here to mosh, just here for that breakdown part, will buy the CD go home and read the lyrics and come back with a different viewpoint or whatever. Like on the new E.P. ■ wrote, "Without ■ message hardcore is nothing more than heavy metal." Which is really ■ it is. If you're not saying anything, then what are you doing? Playing for the sake of playing? That's fine but the idea of hardcore is the music is the vehicle. You're supposed to be telling people something, telling them your ideas. If you're not there's ■ reason to ■ it.

ARTIE: We're not trying to say, "Alright, go out and protest this and think about that..." You can just write things that ■ sincere and write things knowledgeably and creatively and not just say, "We're gonna write about animals and then about not abusing women and then about ■ pride..." That's all well and good, but you want to ■ from a different perspective 'cause you can't have one perspective on all different issues. Just the fact that it's there and it's a creation and it's different, ■ if it's ■ about anything anyone ■ relate to, it's better than just being bland and the ■.

JUSTIN: Don't just go out there and say, "You fuck shit and fuck shit up!" What's that about? It's a joke.

Q: It's an easy thing to fall back on. But you guys tackle things like the government. The government could ■ less about how much, "scene pride" you have. You notice how small a world most hardcore lyrics tackle.

JUSTIN: Well we're not trying to ■ Billy Blanks fuckin' motivational Tae-Bo (laughs). We're not a motivational band we're just putting ideas out there and if you pick up on them and you're into them, cool, ■ back next show and sing along. We're not telling you what to do, we're just telling you what ■ do and how ■ and here ■ are. We're not saying, "Do this and you will do this!", because people don't want to hear that. You don't want to go to ■ show and ■ told what to do. But you should go to ■ show looking to leave with something ■ than ■ T-shirt and ■ sticker.



ARTIE: The whole point of the music is to be confrontational and thought-provoking, ■ if you're Sick Of It All, all the way up to Jimmy Eat World. The whole point is to have ■ thought in your head. Even if it's something you heard or something ■ else told you that you didn't want to hear and you're thinking about how to counteract that. It's all about having ■ thought process rather than going and having mindless entertainment like television or watching Kid Rock play ■ show. (laughs) That's entertainment and this is communication and that's the difference between this kind of music and that shit.

JUSTIN: If you're seriously into hardcore and you're looking to make something from it, you have to take the next step. You're attracted to [redacted] shows by the aggressiveness and the music but that's just to lure you in. It's like the song of the siren. But when you're in and you're moshing away, we're also saying something. We're trying to get a message [redacted] to you. For a lot of [redacted] the music is the directness, like when I first heard Black Flag I thought the music [redacted] everything. Then I listened to the lyrics and I [redacted] like, "Whoa, this isn't a joke." That's [redacted] of it. Chokehold did the same thing. They [redacted] playing third grade mosh metal but they had a lot to say.

ARTIE: Dead Kennedys [redacted] the first band that got me into punk 'cause I thought it [redacted] funny to hear, "Lynch, lynch the landlord." But when I really read the lyrics [redacted] looked [redacted] my [redacted] and related the two I thought, "Wow, this is pretty fucked up." They [redacted] saying shit [redacted] one else was saying [redacted] the time.

JUSTIN: When you hear a certain song for the first time you go, "Holy fuck, that's exactly what I [redacted] thinking!" When you realize it's not just a mindless melody and you go, "Are they talking to me?"

Q: Do kids ever come up to you and say, "Thanks for writing [redacted] one song it helped me out when I was going through this or that?"

JUSTIN: Oh yeah, a lot. It's great. It's also cool when people come up to us and are like, "I really [redacted] that song because it's about this or this" and we're like, "Whoa, no it's not...but o.k." It's [redacted] that people read the lyrics and interpret them in their own way.

Q: Now both you guys are in Milhouse and Justin you [redacted] in [redacted] Judas Factor?

JUSTIN: I was, I quit.

Q: Dammit, there goes my interview..forget it. No..um..Do you think it's harder or easier write since you have [redacted] outlets as opposed to one.? Will you write something and say, "Well that wouldn't really [redacted] for Indecision but would go well for Milhouse?"

JUSTIN: Well [redacted] don't limit ourselves but there's just certain things Indecision just wouldn't do. Like play an acoustic song...

ARTIE: But Judas Factor would...JUSTIN: Judas Factor [redacted] like whatever I played Rob (Fish) would be, "Oh yeah, that [redacted] great!" Milhouse is a totally different thing. It's [redacted] collaboration. The three bands [redacted] all really different. Even when I was in all three bands writing songs, it wasn't really hard because the songs aren't interchangeable. If they were I wouldn't have wanted to be in the three bands.

Q: Are [redacted] you guys straightedge?

ARTIE: I was. JUSTIN: I am.

Q: Is [redacted] a common misconception [redacted] people label you [redacted] straightedge band?

JUSTIN: I've been straightedge for seven years and still X up every [redacted] in awhile, but [redacted] lot of people assume just because I do it, all the guys must be straightedge.

ARTIE: I think the image of the band at first...well I think hardcore started to blow up again the same time straight edge did with bands like Mouthpiece and Strife. So for awhile, every hardcore band that came out was billed a straightedge band. And it [redacted] almost true. So I think when you have a name [redacted] Indecision and the logo used [redacted] [redacted] very nice and clean, [redacted] may have lead people on. Still, to [redacted] day, we're pretty clean kids, we're good, I'm never drunk on stage, I don't have my mohawk up [redacted] lot of times...(laughs)

JUSTIN: It's a really old, popular misconception. If people ask if we're a straightedge band I tell them, "no." At this point, in [redacted] it's a personal thing and if your band wants to sing about it, cool, but...you know...

ARTIE: It's cool if you want to reaffirm [redacted] if you really feel that strongly about it and especially when you're young and it's something cool to do. When I hear bands sing about straightedge nowadays I just become



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completely disinterested. I'm like, "Good..I'm glad for you." It's been done though. Take it ■ another level. They're ■■■ like, "I'm straight because..." or " This is ■■■ will happen because of straightedge..." Don't just keep saying; I don't drink, I don't drink, I don't drink. If you get that ■■■ you fucking snap ■■■ turn into me (laughs).

Q: Well you guys sing about how repressive Catholicism is, but straight-edge ■■■ almost that oppressive to me. Is it because it's a personal choice you've made instead of a forced one?

JUSTIN: It's become like second nature. I don't drink and don't smoke. I've never walked around slapping beers out of people's hands.

ARTIE: I ■ (laughs).

JUSTIN: People like ■■■ always the first to fall. Extremeists. I think ■■■ is a very positive thing but I've never felt the need to be like, "I am straightedge and I am better than you!" That's just another drug, it becomes a joke.

Q: I think ■ lot of U.S kids have it easy because it's pretty difficult to get access to alcohol anyway, ■ being straightedge isn't ■ problem... until they go ■■■ to college. (laughs).

JUSTIN: Well you're not SUPPOSED to drink until you're twenty one so you're really SUPPOSED to be straightedge.

ARTIE: It's funny, the people who run the record label (Wreck-Age), Amber and Paulos, used to live in Greece. In Greece, alcohol is a beverage you drink with dinner. It's very accepted, even younger kids drink wine. But no one drinks to excess. So getting drunk is considered the stupidest, most low-class thing you could do. Almost no one gets slovenly drunk. That's the kind of society you want. One that instills education ■■■ a higher mind set. Not, "You can't drink until this age and even then there ■■■ rules..." When you create these sick rules, society

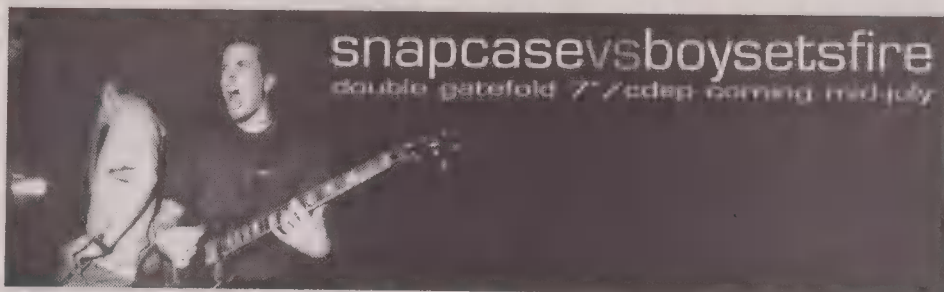
gets all mangled because everyone's trying ■ get around these rules.

Q: Alright...You guys did an interview in Maximumrockn'roll where someone said the word, "faggot". I vaguely remember the interview but I do remember all the ■■■ who took up ■■■ against you guys. Wanna comment on this?

JUSTIN: (rolls eyes) Here's the really abridged version. Two friends of mine interviewed us and one of them said, "Oh, you haven't seen Indecision live? You're ■ fag!" That ■■■ that. I didn't say anything, the

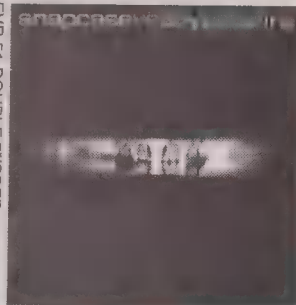
I think sxe is a very positive thing but I've never felt the need to be like, 'I am straightedge and I am better than you!' That's just another drug, it becomes a joke.

people interviewing me said it. *Maximumrocknroll* blew up with all these people writing letters saying, "How could you let this horrible word slip by!" Instead of taking the blame like a mature, 20-year old magazine, they decided to blame the band. "Justin should have stopped the interview and addressed the situation." That's not my responsibility. I don't police

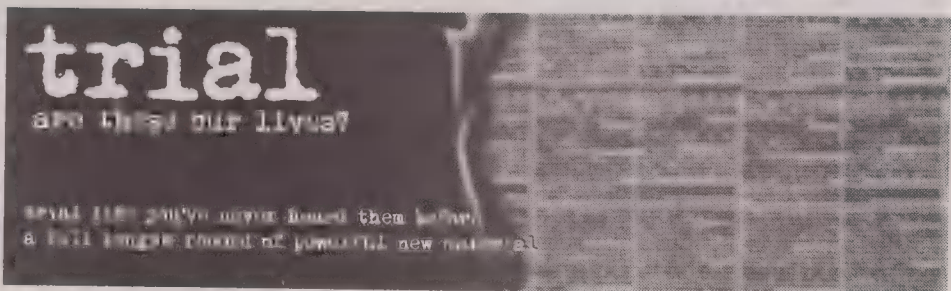


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interviews, I answer questions. But people were really getting on their case for being this P.C. recipe book and letting that word slip by. So frantically, they blamed the band. I was in trying to explain myself and they just attacked my letter. I said that, "fag" has become a mollified word, it's not this, "verbal dagger." They did not agree at all and refused to listen. I am like, "What planet are you from?" I hear people say all day long.

ARTIE: It's pointless to argue about that because no one's gonna bend, no one's gonna agree on shit.

JUSTIN: It may me look like a homophobe to the readers because I didn't stop the interview. Give me a break. It's the magazine's fault! Read the fucking interview before you send it to the printers!

Q: No one reads the magazine anymore anyway (laughs).

JUSTIN: I think the issue with our interview was the first I read in a long time because it sucks. Half the bands they cover are these garage-punk bands no one's ever heard of in the first place. How do I know the guys in those bands aren't rapists or serial killers?

ARTIE: You don't police the lives of every member of every band.

JUSTIN: Don't put us on a record for something we didn't even say!

ARTIE: I don't say "fag". I use the much more diplomatic term... "Homo." (laughs)

Q: "Carpe Diem" is sort of like the band's motto, correct?

ARTIE: What's that mean anyway? (laughs)

JUSTIN: Check it out. I have a stamp that says, "carpe diem" on it and I stamp all the letters I send out with it. I brought the letters to the post-office and I give them to the guy and he's like, "Carpe diem? Does that mean airmail?" (laughs) I am like, "Yeah, yeah... it's airmail." So the guy starts putting the airmail stickers on them and I'm like, "No... just send

it through, they'll know." But it is like... "Holy shit..." (laughs).

ARTIE: Airmail? To Brooklyn and Long Island? (laughs)

JUSTIN: Morons... It's just something you have to strive for. We say it a lot like you have to go to bed thinking that tomorrow you won't wake up and you're happy and satisfied with the way you spent your day. There's a lot of times I'll go to sleep feeling like a hypocrite because I didn't do everything I wanted to do that day. But that's something you have to strive for.

Q: Like someone saying, "Come on do this.."

JUSTIN: Impulse can be good or bad. You should go do it because you know what's going to happen. It's not easy to do because a lot of people are like, "Oh, I gotta work..." I understand, but we shouldn't strive to live our lives to make money. We should strive to live our lives the way we want to. That's the goal.

ARTIE: You don't have to live like we do but you have to do something with your life. Don't be a drone. You don't have to contribute to society 'cause I hate society so there's no reason to contribute to it. Just be content with yourself.

JUSTIN: Just make your mark on your little reality. You don't have to make your mark on this world, no one cares about that. If you can fool yourself and say, "I like to work 9-5 every day!"... then you're not living.

ARTIE: My friend works at K-Mart (laughs) about ten to twelve hours a day. He went to college for four years, he was working at K-Mart before he went to college, he could've gotten the position without spending all that money. He's like, "Well it's alright, I make decent money, I get two weeks vacation..."

JUSTIN: That's just giving up. That's raising the white flag to life and saying, "Well... Here I am!" Working at K-Mart? Come on.

ARTIE: If you worked at K-mart but you were trying to write a book at the same time and had a family to support and were sacrificing for your family or just really believed in K-mart, that's fine. But my friend's 22 and that's for him.

JUSTIN: People just throw their hands up and say, "I got a job. Maybe I'll find a wife and I'm all right!" Is that your life? People say you only have one life so you gotta do something more with it than that.

Q: These are the same people who base success on material possession and accumulation of wealth.

JUSTIN: You say to them, "Go do what you want" and they say, "I can't I gotta work so I can buy a new... air freshener for my car!" (laughs).

ARTIE: I was talking to someone the other night and they're like, "Oh, I'm making more money than my parents, it's a good job..." I'm like, "That's cool, what are you gonna do? You gonna travel?" and they're like, "No, I can't, I gotta keep making money!" What are you gonna do with it if you're not gonna spend it? You can be successful monetarily wise, but then what?

JUSTIN: "I have all this money and I can't do anything 'cause my foot's tied to my job."

ARTIE: What's your trophy? A fucking Porsche? A nice house? What does it get you? You die in your nice house.

Q: That's it... Anything else you wanna say?

ARTIE: I'm upset that Jim Testa didn't come to this interview himself.

Q: He's home counting the mass profits Jersey Beat has won him (laughs)

ARTIE: Yup, I know how it is. (laughs)

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A-F RECORDS

error type: 11

By Tom Minarchick
Photos by Jim Testa

Error Type:11 formed after World's Fastest Car, also known as "Walter from Quicksand's other band", split apart a few years ago. Since then Artie Shepherd - best known for as the guitarist for LI's mighty Mind Over Matter, as well as his stint as second guitarist in NYC's Bad Trip - went on to form Error Type:11, who've released a 7-inch, a full-length CD, a new EP on Crank!, and have a new album called Amplified to Rock, which will be released on SOME RECORDS in October. Over the last couple of years of touring, they have developed a growing and dedicated fan base. I recently spoke to Artie about the history of the band, their new album, and his plans for total domination of the modern rock world. Here's what he had to say.

Q: So how did ET11 first get together?

A: I had quit World's Fastest Car and I was playing acoustic in coffee houses. Our guitar player's band, Clockwise, had just broken up, and he called me and said they'd broken up. He ended up asking me if I wanted to try playing together and I thought he was talented in Clockwise, so I said, "Yeah! What the hell". We got together in my basement and played some song's I'd written, one of which was called "I Hope All Your Dreams Come True," which is on our first album. The guy I lived with, Eric the drummer from Bad Trip, came downstairs and started playing. That's kinda how it happened. Then Scott, who was the bass player in Mind Over Matter, joined the band like a week later, but he's not in the band now.

Q: How long were you together before you recorded the first album?

A: Four months

Q: I remember reading a quote from you about putting the songs from the 7-inch onto the album. You said something like "I don't care if people don't think it's 'punk rock' to put those songs on the album too."

A: Yeah. 1000 copies of a 7-inch isn't a lot. The songs aren't exactly fuckin' punk rock. They're songs that should be heard. You do vinyl for people who buy vinyl, which isn't that many people.

Q: The band is obviously connected to the hardcore scene because the members were in hardcore or hardcore-affiliated

bands before, but your sound is nothing like hardcore. Does this association with being a hardcore-related band determine who will or won't check your band out? A lot of the people in hardcore are into a certain style of music and aren't exactly open to the stuff you play, but at the same time a person into rock or whatever might not check you out because they think you're a hardcore band. Do you think people in the so-called "scene" are close minded?

A: I think that a lot. I think they're a lot more open-minded that I give them credit for, but it's still true though. We just finished two weeks with Grade and we're with Gameface for two more weeks. A lot of those kids that are into metal & shit aren't really digging us, you

know? What can you do? I mean I would LOVE to be put on a big fuckin' rock tour because that would make sense for us. Playing HC shows is fun & cool, but it's all we really know. So that's why we do it, but we still don't belong. I don't think it stigmatizes us to that many people because HC is actually really small. It's a little speck of dirt under the fingernail of the world, you know? It's just not that big. To us it's big, because it's our world, but in reality it really isn't that big. I don't think it holds us back though. We're the type of band that would either be on a small indie or a big major. We wouldn't be on a big indie because we don't have an "indie rock" sound. We have a mainstream, major label sound, but I think it's cool to be like that and be on a small label and play to kids like this. Because then maybe they can feel like "this is our Stone Temple Pilots" of the hardcore scene. It works in some ways and in other ways it doesn't. It's frustrating and to me it's extremely frustrating, but I have to appreciate what I have. The HC scene is our vehicle to pay in front of people. If we didn't have that we'd be another rock band from NYC. I don't know if we've reached the level yet where it's an issue about other people not checking us out because we're associated with HC. I also don't think we're popular enough in the HC scene for us to be stigmatized. I don't think people won't check us out because of that. I honestly don't think it's an issue.

Q: It seems to me that the fans you do have are very dedicated to your band though. I'm signed up to the Quicksand ONElist e-mail service and everyday people write about how much

they love your band, they tell everybody to go to the shows and support you guys, and they talk about the shows the next day...

A: Yeah. That's great. It's always been my dream to be someone's favorite band. Hopefully it will happen even more now after our next record comes out. Yeah, it's like that to me too. Like, we'll play small shows, but they're extremely enthusiastic shows. To me it says that if we're given the opportunity to play in front of a lot of people, like opening for a bigger rock band, we're going to take advantage of it and then there will be a whole lotta enthusiastic people. It's just a matter of time and a lot of hard work. It's unfortunate that coming from the HC scene, it's so much harder than if we had Some Records multi-million dollar contract and a big booking agent that would get us all these huge shows. Although it might suck, but who knows? I haven't done it yet.

Q: But at the same time you are very fortunate to have such a loyal fan base. Even if it's not an "arena rock" sized crowd.

A: Yeah. Exactly. That's the whole point. You can't bite the hand that feeds you. Those kids are cool as shit and we meet awesome people. We meet dicks too and I let them know when I'm on stage. It's a childish immature reaction I have to things. When the band first started it was kinda my thing to be a dick, ya know? I'd get up on stage and say "We're the greatest band in the world and if you don't like us you're fucking stupid!" If I saw a band doing that while playing in front of 30 people I would think it was

fucking genius! A lot of kids don't get the sarcasm in it.

Q: They just think you're a cocky prick.

A: Which I am, you know. That's fine because I am cocky, but I'm not that cocky. I do it as a joke. I do it with [REDACTED] for fun and for [REDACTED] laugh because it's funny to us. A lot of kids don't get it though. It doesn't translate and they think I'm angry and I fucking hate them. How could I hate people that pay to [REDACTED] my band? It's really not right. I've kind of purposely held back and it's really hard for me to do, but there's always this one kid that stands right in front of you, especially when you're playing on the floor, with his arms crossed staring into space. It's like that is the hardest thing to fucking deal with. Sometimes I just fucking loose it. When we're jumping up and down on stage and our amps are falling off because the stage is rickety, or the mics gonna break my tooth, or the PA is so bad that I can't hear anything. We'll play, but I'm not exactly gonna be Mr. fuckin' Happy about it. I'm 26 and I've been doing this for 10 years and I'd like [REDACTED] at least be able to hear something. That's the reality we're in right now and everyday [REDACTED] a learning experience for me over the last 2 years. I've never sang and I was never a front man.

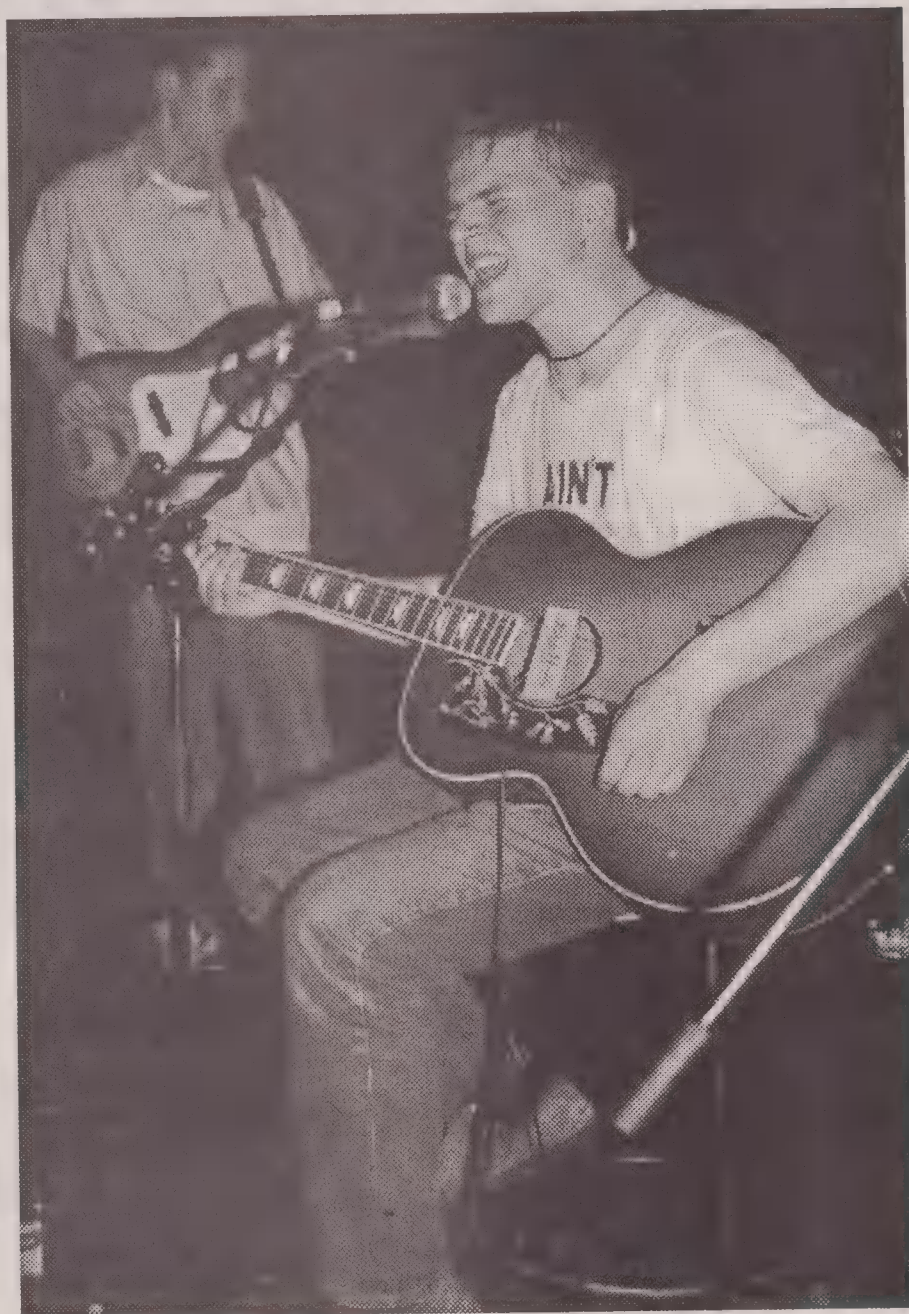
Q: I think your vocals are a lot better on the new EP than they were on the first record.

A: My voice got a lot better and I learned to use it by going on tours a bunch of times. The thing about the new record that was cool is we had [REDACTED] many extra songs. That's why we did the Crank! EP. We went, "Let's do this EP, then the album." The idea behind it is that we write what [REDACTED] write and we put

it out. We don't go "we can't do this song because it's too this or too that." We write what we write. We put it out. I think all of it's good. We've grown as a band and [REDACTED] songwriters. We

got [REDACTED] new bass player and he fit really well into the sound we're going for and it's been a lot of fun. As we've got closer [REDACTED] friends, it got really good musically and it's amazing. like

I'll come downstairs with an idea or a song structure and they're done writing in 10 minutes. I don't even think about it. It's easier than it should be, I think. I almost feel as if I should put



more effort into it. It's (the EP) definitely a vast development and the album is done also and it will be out October 1. It's even better, at least in our opinion. It sounds better. We've also been working with John Agnello and the EP was the first thing we did with him and then we just did the album. So we kind of know each other better. We had a lot more time and we just really spent it wisely. We did a lot of like slick rock sounding shit, which is what we really wanted to do. We did it in this fucking sick studio. The Misfits do handclaps on the record, too. Phil and I sang on the new Misfits record. They were recording next door to us. It's a fucking cool record, it's a lot of fun with a lot of great vibes. We just keep going. I got a whole other record written. I'm like ready to go. As soon as we were done recording, I started writing again and I know Phil's got a lot of shit. We'll be touring a lot the next year. I like to put out a record a year. We've put out two albums and two EP's in two years. To me that's pretty good.

Q: Well if you already have another record written will you keep it down for a while? Does that mean you'll limit your amount of material released or will you just keep releasing stuff as you write it?

A: We even had an extra song that we didn't put on the album. I want to just keep putting out stuff. Hot Water Music kinda taught us that. They almost overdo it. Their opinion was "if we're selling X amount of records and if you put out all of these other records, you're going to sell the same amount with every record." So that just makes it easier for you to stay on the road and keep making money. it makes sense. Also they have a lot of people working for them because they put out stuff on so many labels. So their name is in every fanzine like 50 times, between advertisements, reviews, interviews, and pictures. It's really brilliant and we learned that from them. We said, "We got these songs so let's get people working for us on the east coast and the west coast" and I think it works out. Crank! is great and SOME RECORDS is great. Hopefully everything will work together and we'll start getting bigger.

Q: What I like about HWM is how they release a lot of stuff that's all great, but it doesn't all sound like the [band name] song. A lot of bands that

put out a lot of [band name] sound like they're doing the same song over and over, but not HWM. I think they are the most talented band in music period.

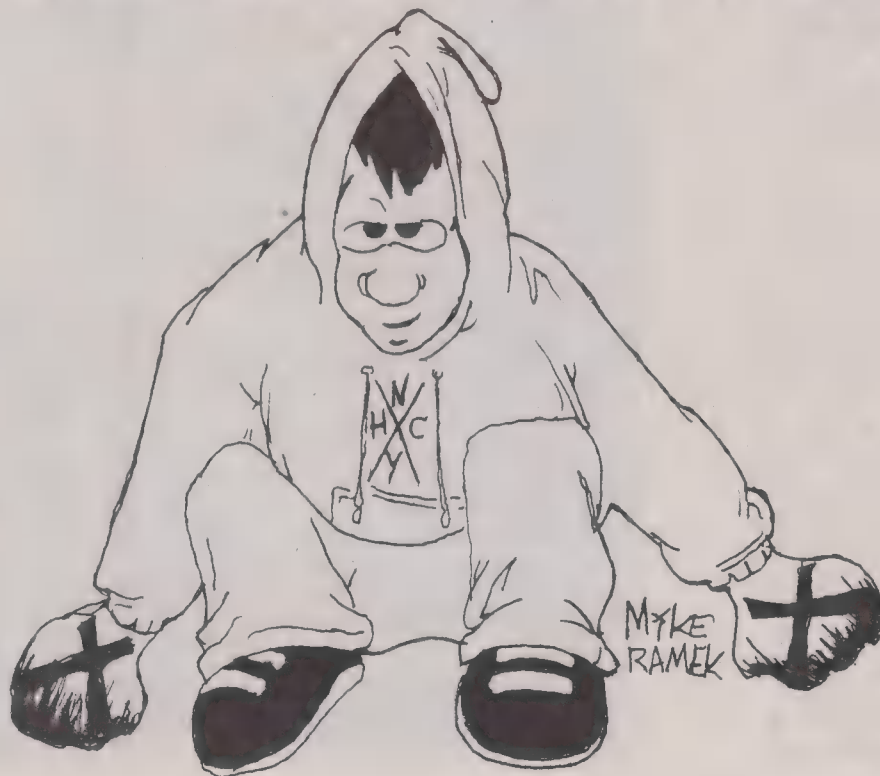
A: That's [band name] they're super creative guys. If you can get away with it then do it. Like I said, I'll write any kind of song. It doesn't matter if it's acoustic, psychedelic, fuckin rock, or pop. We have a fucking commercial sounding radio hit song on our [band name] album with tambourine and everything on it.

Q: What kind of music do you listen to the most though?

A: Prog rock is my favorite. Like Yes is my favorite band, they have been since I was a little kid. Like Genesis was a huge influence on our album as far as the sound went. Not the other guys, they fucking hate it. I kinda chose vocal sounds and bass sounds off of Genesis records. Me and the producer would think about it a lot then everybody would put their thing in and it would make a certain sound. I also like a lot of 60s pop music, British Invasion shit, [band name] American indie rock like Apples in Stereo, Olivia Tremor Control, and Guided By Voices, who are another of my favorite bands

Q: Chuck from HWM told me that one of the things he loves about SOME RECORDS is that they are really focused on the bands they sign. They don't try to sign a ton of bands or do a distro with the label. They just focus on the bands they have.

A: SOME RECORDS is like the most artist friendly label I've ever dealt with. It was originally Sammy's idea and he was playing in World's Fastest Car at the time. We'd walk back from rehearsal and [band name] about it. He'd say, "I want to start this record label. I wanna do things right and help out the bands do the right things and make records, and I can still be able to tour and have the label and not go bankrupt." They're just great and I can't say enough nice things about them. They want what's best for us and we want the best for them. We got offers from every label you can think of for the new record and we turned them all down. What really sold me on staying with SOME RECORDS was hearing the new Six Going on Seven album



before it came out. That's my favorite record. The Fireside record what made me do the EP with Crank!.

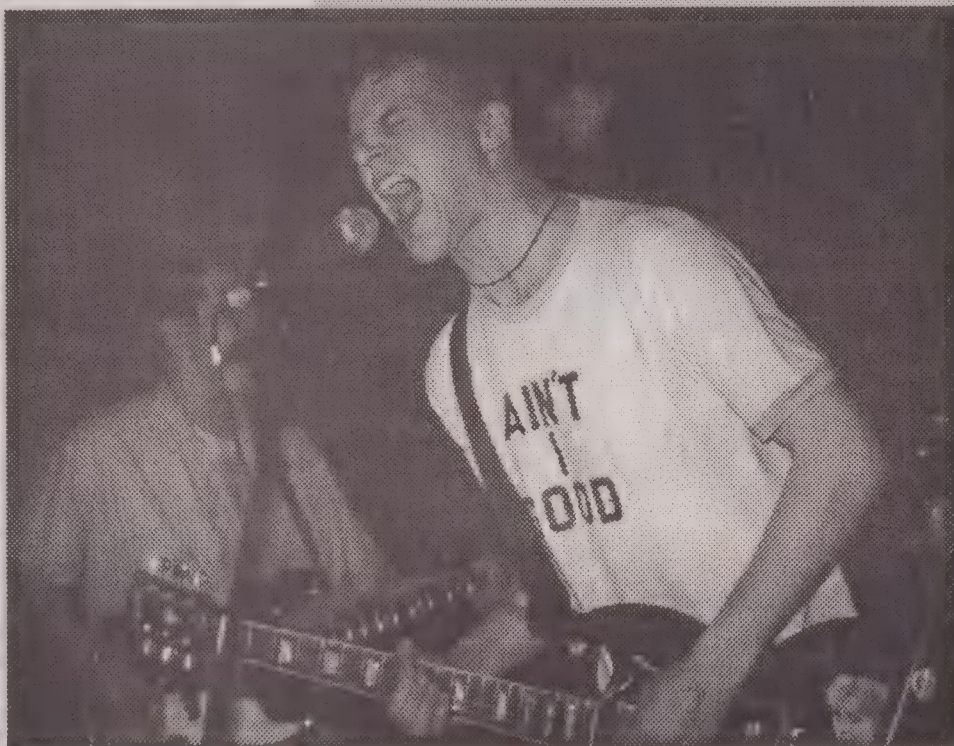
Q: I really like how SOME RECORDS puts out records that aren't genre oriented. They just sign good bands and that's their only criteria for signing bands. They're not into making a ton of money off of merchandising like some other labels. They just want to support good music. It doesn't matter if it's rock, it just has to be good.

A: Yeah man! Every kid listens to Guns N' Roses. just like Into Another were an [redacted] for HC kids to like cheesy 80s metal. I just like [redacted] have fun. I want to be like the HC kids' Oasis. That would be my dream come true. I don't know if everyone will get it or not, but we'll try our best until a big conglomerate record label comes and gives us millions of dollars. In HC you have to pay a lot of attention. You get wrapped up in that little world and it gets kinda pathetic, but everyone grows out of it and gets into indie rock, or starts looking like rockabilly guys. Next thing you know they're looking like [redacted] Beatles and a minute later they're a raver. It's all kids trying to find themselves and eventually they will.

Q: The lines between different music are definitely starting to blur. You got all kids of kids into Jon Spencer Blues Explosion and Rocket from the Crypt that are also into punk, HC, indie rock, or whatever. I think that bigger indie labels are doing a lot of what the majors tried to do, and failed, by have they bands that are accessible to a variety of people. The only problem the majors had is signing shitty bands like Matchbox 20, Kid Rock, and Sugar Ray to try and appeal everybody for a long time. People are getting smarter and [redacted] what a bunch of shit [redacted] stuff is and [redacted] they can go somewhere else to find good music. It's not all heavy and inaccessible just because it's so-called "underground."

A: In 4 or 5 years all of those labels will get bought up again, but that's cool. Hopefully bands like us and 6 Going On 7, who are a little more difficult to grasp in [redacted] genre, will benefit from that. I can only hope we do. If [redacted] could sell 20,000 or 30,000 records I'd be able to live! It's [redacted] hard because you play these shows and the kids don't get it and blah, blah, blah, but you gotta keep chuggin' along. I just gotta hope [redacted] get the billion dollar contract and we get on MTV. That's what the Elliot Smith thing taught me. He got a song on a soundtrack and he lucked out. If you don't put it out like that no one's ever going to hear it. you never know who's going to hear your stuff. It could be the right person [redacted] day at the right time. Like that song "Collecting Dust" on our new EP, that's how I felt about that song. We thought about not putting it on, but I went "Dude, that song could be a fucking soundtrack song! The right person just needs to hear it." If it's on a tape in my basement, [redacted] one's gonna hear it and nothing's gonna happen. So let's get it out there and make something happen. You kinda just gotta throw shit out and hope that people are doing the right thing for you. You just have to choose the people correctly who work for you. It's all luck and timing. So far our luck has sucked, but we'll [redacted] if we can improve it with the next record.

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Phillip Hill - guitars, vocals
Keith Witt - lead vocals
Heather Tabor - bass, vocals
Matt Yonker - drums, vocals

With their rockabilly pompadours, vintage radio microphones, and stenciled black leather jackets, the Teen Idols certainly have a look.

Fortunately, they also have songs.

Like the Blues Brothers, the Nashville-based quartet [redacted] to be on a mission from God, spreading the gospel of Johnny, Joey, Tommy and Dee [redacted] to the [redacted] with their ultracatchy three-chord garagey pop/punk.

Although the Teen Idols have been around since 1992 - guitarist Phillip Hill is the sole survivor from the original lineup - the band only started to catch the public's ear a few years ago, when Ben Weasel discovered the group and helped get them signed to Honest Don's Hardly Used Records. Since then, the band has toured constantly, and that's as it should be, because they're one of the few bands around today that not only has an impressive roster of memorable songs, but can really put on a show. Listen to this band talk about life on the road, and you realize that they're not talking about a job, or making a buck, or pursuing a hobby. For them, touring is a way of life.

We caught up with the Teen Idols this Spring at Maxwell's, midway through their tour with the Lillingtons.

Q: I [redacted] most of your fans don't realize how long this band has been around or how many lineup changes there were early on, since this lineup has been pretty stable and has done the most touring. But if I figured out your bio right, then Phillip is the only original member left, right?

Phil: Right. We go back to 1992 but our first record didn't [redacted] out until November of '97, so a lot of people think that's when we started. But we had tons of 7 inches and compilations and stuff going back to '92. Our first 7 inch actually [redacted] out in '93.

Q: I guess being from Nashville, [redacted] took you a little longer to get a national reputation too.

Phil: Oh yeah, it took a long time to even get our records out of the South.

Q: Is any member of the Teen Idols still a teenager?

Phil: Not anymore! When we first started, I was [redacted] oldest at 19, but I'm [redacted] now. I've been at this a while. Heather's the youngest, she just turned 21.

Q: Okay, so you're teenagers in Nashville, Tennessee in 1992. What were you listening to back then? There really wasn't a lot of pop-punk around yet.

Phil: The Misfits have always been my favorite band, so I [redacted] listening to a lot of their stuff. And old Ramones. Bad Religion. Basically, older stuff. Because you have to remember, in 1992, grunge was really big. [redacted] was all Pearl Jam and Soundgarden and all [redacted] shit. And [redacted] just



Interview by Jim Testa
 Photos by Jim Testa and Ricky Saporta

**No matter how
 hot it is, you're
 always cool in a
 leather jacket.**

wanted to play old-school Ramones and Descendents-type pop punk. That's basically why ■ started the band.

Keith: How about me?

Q: How about you? What were you listening to?

Keith: I was actually listening to a ■ of Oi! and street-punk. Toy Dolls, I love ■ Toy Dolls. I still listen to a ■ of Screeching Weasel, Dickies, Misfits, ■ type of stuff. A lot of Descendents-type punk.

Q: How about Heather?

Heather: Oh man, you're asking the wrong person. In 1992, I was 12 years old.

me a Screeching Weasel *Wiggle* tape and Phil gave me a Misfits tape. It all happened really quickly. I was 18 then. In 1992, I was off riding horses someplace in Kentucky, living in ■ small, small town.

Q: Let me ask about the leather jackets. They're kind of your trademark. Has that always been a part of the Teen Idols image?

Phil: Always. Since the beginning. Actually, that goes back to bands before this one that I was in. I got my first leather jacket in eighth grade for Christmas and I wore it all year long, and I still do to this day.

Q: I had a friend named Tim Steagall, who's about the punkest guy I ever met, who told me once, 'a leather jacket isn't ■ piece of clothing, it's a way of life.'



Q: We can skip ahead a little bit. When you actually joined the band, what were you listening to?

Heather: They actually just kind of found ■. I wasn't really into any scene. I was just a small town girl.

Q: You actually learned how to play bass just so you could join the Teen Idols, right?

Heather: Yeah, they needed somebody quick, and they needed a girl. And I was the last one left. It's funny, the first punk record I ever heard ■ a Teen Idols record. Because I went to high school with the girl who ■ in the band before me, and she gave me ■ 7 inch. Then Keith gave

Phil: Exactly. And no matter how hot it is, you're always cool in ■ leather jacket.

Matt: I wore a leather jacket before I joined the band too. I'm from New Jersey, I moved to Nashville to be in the band, so even before I got in the band, I had the look. It's weird, I ordered their first 7 inch from Maximum RocknRoll, ■ when I joined the band, I said, 'yeah, I got your first 7 inch.' And they couldn't believe it.

Phil: We only pressed 500 of those, so anytime we meet anyone who has one, we get all excited. We just toured Japan for the first time, and we did an interview with a guy from a zine over there, and he had it. It's crazy where it turns up.

Q: Matt, were are you from in Jersey?

Matt: I'm from a little town in the middle of nowhere way down in South Jersey. It's like 15 minutes south of Cherry Hill. It's almost in Delaware, actually. I was in a band called The Halfings from Philadelphia, that's how I hooked up with these guys.

Q: What was it like when Ben Weasel discovered you and took an interest. That was really a big turning point for you guys, wasn't it?

Phil: Oh, totally. The way we hooked up with him is that we used to send him our old 7 inches whenever they came out. And he wrote us a letter back and said he really liked our stuff. And we wound up playing with the Riverdales and Mr. T Experience on that tour they did in '94, or whenever, in Knoxville. And we ended up meeting Ben in person, and he turned out to be a nice guy, and as they were leaving, he said, 'we'll definitely be talking again.' Then we didn't hear from him for about a year, and one day I came home from work, from this shitty job I had at the time, and there was a message on the answering machine from him. 'Yeah, I'm kinda tired of the road and I want to start producing some bands, and you guys are the first band I want to work with.' And I was like, Fuck yeah! I quit my job the next day. (laughs)

Matt: I remember it was about a week after I moved down to Nashville that Ben called about doing the record together, and I thought, wow, man, good timing! I got here just in time.

Q: What was he like to work with? He has the reputation for being so grumpy and everything.

Phil: Oh, he was great to work with. But he is grumpy sometimes. (laughs) It was fun, though.

Q: What kind of advice does Ben Weasel give you in the studio?

Heather: He doesn't really give you advice.

Keith (imitating Ben's voice): Ahh, quit smoking! (laughs)

Heather: Yeah, that was the only real advice he gave us. He told us that we were going to have to tour a lot and that would mean we'd have to do a lot of singing, and that would be hard on our voices. So he told us not to smoke cigarettes and not drink hard liquor. Other than that, he was just hanging out, shaking his head.

Phil: He helped with a lot of other things too. Some of the lead parts I had on songs, he helped me switch them around so they were better. Little things like that. Most of our songs were already written when we got to the studio, but he helped us with a couple of harmony parts and a couple of leads.

Heather: Most of those songs were old songs, because it took us so long to make that record. But Ben was like, 'most of these songs are real good songs and nobody's ever heard them, because the 7 inches didn't really get around much, so let's just do these songs and make them better.'

Keith: The thing is, we had all these old songs because nobody really offered to put them out for us, so we kept waiting to make a record. We talked to Lookout! for a while and they just gave us the runaround. I know for me, it seems like we've been playing those songs forever, and I haven't been in the band all that long. I can't imagine what it's like for Phil.

Phil: Yeah, I've been playing some of those songs for seven years.

Heather: That's why when he forgets one on stage and fucks up, we all freak out. 'How could you forget that song? You've been playing it for 7 years! You wrote that song!'

Q: So what's it like being the only girl in a band full of smelly punk rock boys who tour all year long?

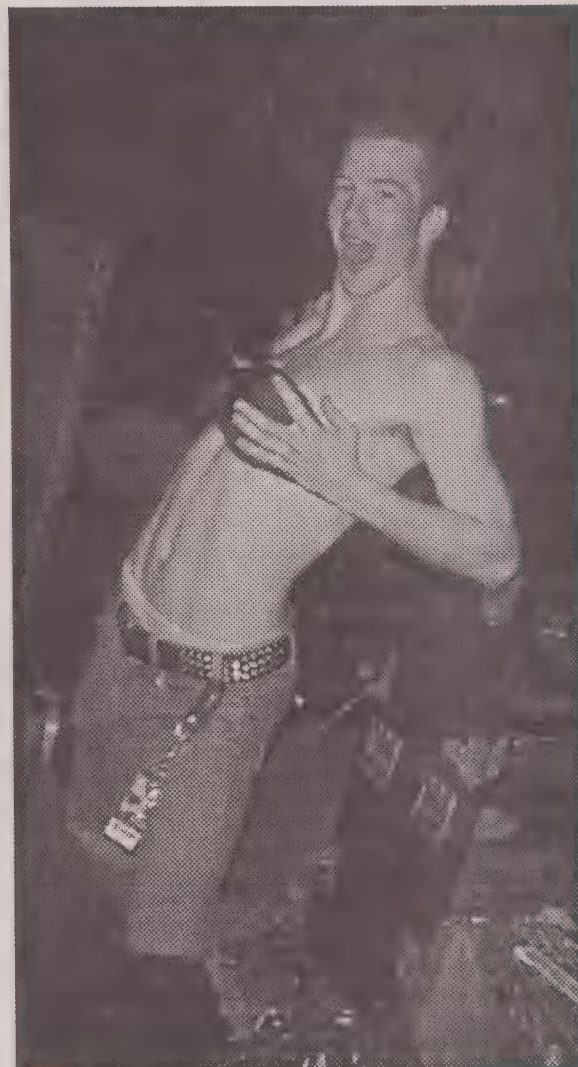
Heather: We all stink. We all drink beer every night and wake up farting in the morning. We all tour together and we all go a week without showers. I just clean up better than they do, I think. But it's not too bad. The van

doesn't stink as bad as you'd think, either. I don't know why, but it doesn't.

Keith: That's because we have a big Ryder truck to tour in. If we had a little van, forget it. We'd all choke on death.

Phil: We tour a lot too. Last year we were on the road eight months straight.

Heather: We were home a week here, then toured another month, then home a week and wait for the next tour. It got pretty bad, especially in the summer. Everybody was just sweaty and sweaty and sweaty. It was just bad.



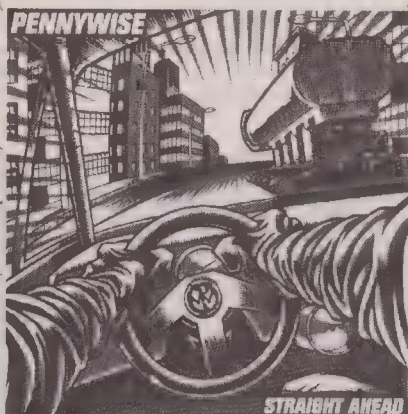
I guess they don't always wear those leather jackets.
Photo by Ricky Saporta

Q: I guess you're doing okay as a band, then. I mean, I know you're not rich, but you're not home working at Kinko's either.

Phil: No, we make enough on the road to eat every day. We sleep in the van or stay with friends, we don't get hotel rooms, so that saves a lot of money. We've been touring for so long that we know everybody in every city.

Keith: Actually, now it's starting to get hard, because we know so many people in every town that you want to try and talk to everybody and you just don't have time.

PENNYWISE

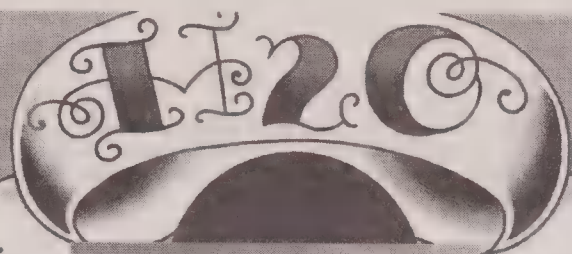


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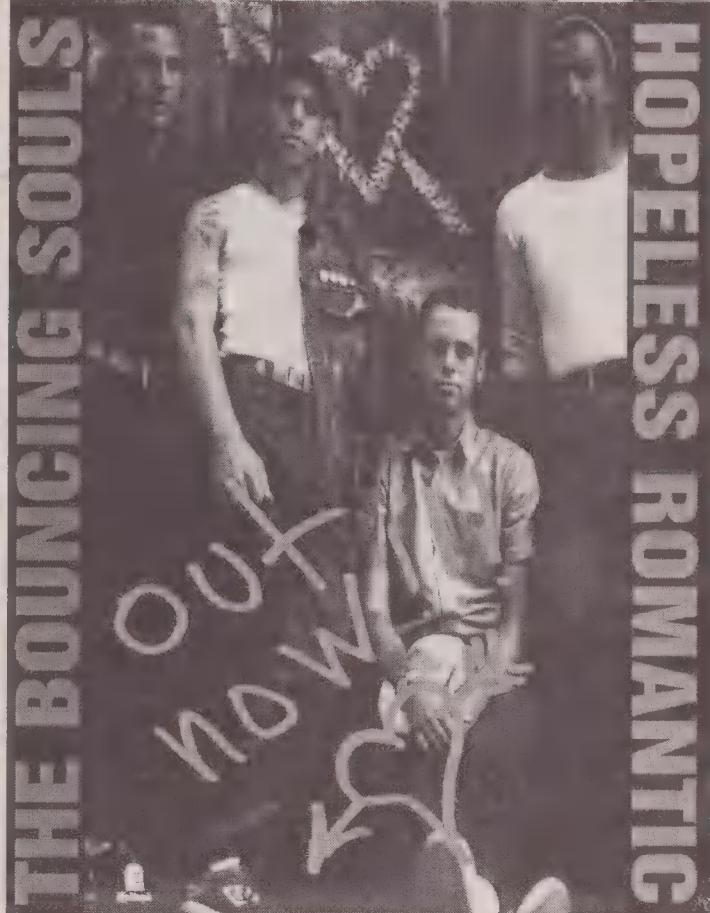


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Heather: Yeah, last night ~~was~~ just retarded. There ~~were~~ all these people who wanted to talk, and ~~we~~ had to get ready and then ~~we~~ had to play, and then they all left and they ~~made~~ made because ~~we~~ didn't say goodbye to them. It's hard, there are just so many people coming out who know us. But ~~it's~~ really nice in ~~a~~ way too. It makes it worthwhile coming back to a town, ~~you~~ you know you're going to see people you've met before and you like.

Phil: There's not a lot of money in ~~it~~ but it ~~sure~~ beats working ~~a~~ desk job or flipping burgers.

Q: You mentioned that you're still playing ~~a~~ lot of old songs. Spending ~~a~~ much time on the road, is it hard ~~to~~ write and learn new songs?

Phil: It's really hard to write new songs on the road because it's such ~~a~~ hectic schedule. If you're not actually playing, you're driving or you're sleeping. Last year, I bought a little 4-track and I started to ~~write~~ songs on tour, but ~~it~~ was so hard. We only had four songs prepared when ~~we~~ went into ~~the~~ studio, the rest of the time we had ~~to~~ write in the studio. That was ~~a~~ ~~new~~ experience for me, man, and it was weird. I don't want ~~to~~ do that again. We'll have to try and find time to just stay home ~~a~~ bit and write songs for next time.

Q: Keith, do you get involved in the songwriting?

Keith: I can't write or play anything ~~at~~ all. I am the most unmusical person there is. I can't ~~even~~ clap on beat. I am really, really bad.

Matt: It's funny, there'll be a song on the radio and Keith will start clapping along, and we're all like, dude, what beat ~~is~~ you on? Because he's totally off.

Heather: It's the Keith beat.

Q: You guys are booked all through the summer, and then you were saying that in September you want to go to Europe or Canada... Does it ever get to the point where you just want to ~~go~~ home for a week?

Phil: Well, we go home for a couple of days whenever the tour gets down that way.

Heather: You like to go home for ~~a~~ few days just ~~to~~ do the laundry and eat ~~and~~ sleep. And then after a few days, you wake up and you say, okay, it's time to go again.

Phil: You have to remember ~~we~~ live in Nashville, Tennessee. That's not a place where you want ~~to~~ stay for a long time.

Matt: I know ~~it~~ might be more exciting to live in New York or San Francisco than it is to live in Nashville, but for us, it doesn't really matter. Because touring is ~~a~~ really exciting thing. You're in ~~a~~ different city almost every day, with people you haven't seen in months. You get ~~out~~ out sometimes and then you ~~go~~ to ~~a~~ city where you haven't been in ~~a~~ couple of months, and all your friends there come out and they're like, 'yeah, we're gonna party tonight.' And then the next night you're in a different city and those people want to party. And after ~~a~~ week of that...

Heather: ... you finally get to ~~a~~ city where you don't know anyone, and you're glad in ~~a~~ way. You get to take the night off.

Keith: But ~~it's~~ great. You only get to see your ~~best~~ friends in most of these cities two or three times a year, at most, so it's like a family reunion every day.

Phil: And sometimes you get a couple of days off, like we just had two days off without a show. And by that second day, you're ready to play. It's really not work for us. When we're on stage, we're having ~~a~~ good time, ~~and~~ it's always fun.

Keith: In the beginning of a tour, it's kind of hard, because you haven't played in while and you get real tired. Some nights, when you're starting ~~a~~ tour, you play ~~a~~ couple of songs and you feel like you can't play one more. But after ~~a~~ couple of weeks, you feel like you can play all night. It gets really fun.

Q: The Teen Idols aren't what you would call a band with a message.

Heather: No, we're a party band.

Keith: We're ~~a~~ good time band. We play songs that make you feel good. Sometimes though... there are personal stories more than messages in our songs, and I think those will stand the test of time better than any kind of political message ~~we~~ might do.

Q: Okay, you talk about being a good-time band. One thing I've noticed lately at punk shows is that a lot of kids comes to shows and they seem like they don't know how to have a good time. They don't look like they're enjoying themselves. Do you ever see that?



Heather - Photo by Ricky Saporta

Keith: Yeah, they stand there smoking cigarettes with their hands in their pockets. If you want to be like that, stay home and listen to the Smiths. Going to a punk show is supposed to be about having fun, bouncing around and having a good time. That's how it should be.

Phil: It's like they're watching something on TV, even when they're there in person.

Q: But the Teen Idols is going to cure all that.

Phil: Well, we try to talk to people in the crowd. Get them involved. If ~~we~~ ~~see~~ a kid in front that knows all the words, we'll get him on stage and get him to sing ~~some~~ of the songs with us. The whole idea is to get the audience involved and make everyone have a good time. Because ~~if~~ no fun for us if everyone's just standing around looking bored. It makes it harder for ~~us~~ to put on a good show if the crowd's not into it.

Heather: It's funny, we always play way better when the audience is quiet, because ~~we~~ get bored and concentrate ~~on~~ what we're doing. When

everyone's going nuts, we usually suck because we just go crazy on stage and no one knows what they're doing. But that makes it a lot more fun. But, you know, if they want a perfect song, they can go buy the record and play it at home. If they come to see us, they don't want to hear all the right notes, they want to see us get crazy, right?

Q: I know what you mean. If there's 20 people there but they all go nuts, it's a lot better than 100 people who just stand there.

Heather: Exactly.

Phil: Totally.

Keith: One of the things we're learning to do is, if we show up and there's only ten people there, we still want to put on a good show. That's tough sometimes but that's something that we try to do.

Heather: One of the problems is that Keith and I start talking to people in the crowd instead of playing songs, and Phil and Matt are like, hello? Can we do another song now? But we're so into it we don't notice.

Keith: We figure, you paid your five bucks to get in, you might as well get your money's worth. Get on stage, talk to the band, whatever.

Q: When you tour that much, I guess you do a mix of things – some club shows, some hall shows...

Phil: We've been real lucky in the last year we've been able to do some bigger tours as a support band. We've done three tours with No FX in the last year. And Mr. T Experience, we toured with them for six weeks. And we went to Japan with this band called Spread.

Heather: And we just finished a tour with Hi Standard and now we're going to start one with the Swingin' Utters. Every tour it seems like other

bands are helping us more and more. Now Swingin' Utters wants to take us to Europe with them.

Matt: The main reason we're doing this tour now with the Lillingtons is because we haven't done our own headlining tour in a while. And we kind of wanted to get a feel for what our fans are going to be like. The last time we toured on our own, we were drawing 30 people. Now we're doing a lot better. So I think all the touring's helped a lot. We still do lame shows here and there, but it's been a lot better. Every night's kind of like the luck of the draw.

Keith: Last night at Coney Island High was awesome too. Fear was playing downstairs so we thought upstairs would be empty, but it was packed. And there were all these kids crowding the stage who knew all the words.

Q: That must feel really good, when you look in the crowd and the kids know all the words to your songs.

Keith: Oh yeah. It's even better when we're in a town that we haven't been to before and there are kids upfront who know the songs. That's really cool.

Matt: That's what it was like in Japan. Those kids were probably just mouthing the sounds, they probably didn't know what we were saying, but they were right there singing along.

Keith: It actually makes you feel like you're doing something worthwhile, when people are actually buying the records you're putting out and liking them. It's a good feeling.

The Teen Idols, PO Box 150842, Nashville TN 37215-0842, or visit their web page at www.geocities.com/sunsetstrip/palms/4436/main.html

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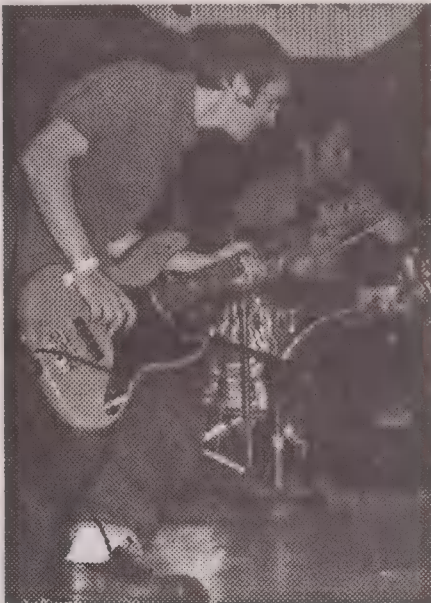
damn personals

Interview and photos by Kristin Forbes

Ken Cook -lead vocals, guitar
Anthony Rossomando -lead guitar, vocals
Jim Davdoski -bass, vocals
Mike Gill -drums

What ever happened to rock and roll? Not what's being played today but real rock music like the Stones and the Who used to do it, that fresh, raw, primal sound, chock full of balls, heart, and soul... music that made women scream and men raise their fists in defiance? When did rock stop rocking, and in rolled all this other candy-coated schmaltz that has given pure rock a roll a bittersweet taste? Boston's own Damn Personals are all about cutting away the fluff and playing rock right again, pure and simple.

The Damn Personals are trying to bring back the best parts of soul and classic pop-rock with great songs and shitloads of style. "A lot of bands don't rock," says Ken Cook, lead singer and guitarist. "It's like a dirty word." "Most of the bands I've seen that actually rock aren't rock bands at all," adds lead guitarist Ant(hony) Rossomando. "They're, like, really really tight experimental bands. We're like, 'Man, why can't this kind of energy be across in a pop song structure?' It's really rare." The dichotomy of the Damn Personals is built on this idea: The members of the band don't take themselves very seriously as people, but they take music very seriously. "We're huge music dorks. We will sit all night and not turn on the TV and listen to records and just talk," says Ant. "When we go see a band, we'll sit there and talk about the band for hours."



The band grew out of years of such listening parties in Connecticut, where all four of the members grew up. Connecticut, back when the Damn Personals were growing up, was a haven for hardcore bands and skate rats, but the scene grew pretty pale, says Ant. Then in 1993, Ant and friends started JC Superska and helped pilot the East Coast ska revival. But the new ska scene quickly turned sour too.

Says Ant, "It just turned into this ugly mess of ska bands that started their bands because they heard [the new ska] and not because they heard the real music."

Ant ended up in another ska band, Johnny Two Bad, with Mike Gill on drums. Neither Mike nor Ant was very happy, but playing ska satisfied their yearning to play music. "It's kind of like looking for a new job," explains Ant. "where it's like, 'We'll, I could go look for a new job that's better, but [the new ska] long as I keep doing this I still have some money.' The analogy is we all like to play out a lot, and if we're not playing out a lot, we all start to get a little weird. We need to be playing out for people... You get the thirst for it."

Eventually, the Connecticut [new ska] got even too bleak for Johnny Two Bad, and that band moved to Boston. Around that time, Ken, who had moved to Boston for school, joined the ska band the Allstonians where he found Jim on bass, a classmate from high school.

The Damn Personals came out of what Ken calls, "the incredible boredom of playing ska and how incredibly crappy the ~~band~~ got." Ken and Ant tried to get the band off their couch in 1995 with a different bass player and drummer, playing a couple of shows over the first month. "It just didn't work out," says Ken. "We weren't into it, like we didn't have the time, and the song writing wasn't there."

A year and a half ago, a second attempt to put the band together failed. "We wrote a bunch of songs and we went and recorded them. And then, it's hard to figure out, one day we had a band and the next day we had no band. It just kind of fell apart disappeared completely."

However, the third time proved to be the charm about ten months ago. Ken quit the Allstonians, dragging Jimb with him, and Johnny Two Bad fell apart. With their line-up set, the guys were ready to put their ska days behind them and rekindle the fire of their rock roots. "We wanted to do something where if I wasn't in the band, I might actually sit down and listen to what we do and actually like it, which is a big change to most of the bands that I've played with," says Ken. "Plus, it looks really silly when you're playing ska and jumping around and doing windmills, so I kind of wanted to get a better soundtrack."

One thing that has strongly influenced the Damn Personals' live show is playing with the NYC band, the Mooney Suzuki.



Says Ken, "They put on such an amazing live show that we would play a show with them and leave early on the ride home would be upset. We'd be like, 'Man, I wish we rocked as hard as those guys did.'" However, those gigs have pigeonholed the Damn Personals as a mod band, a label the band despises and fights to overcome. Says Mike Gill, drummer, "Ken pointed out to me once that one reason people probably think we're saying the mod thing is because it's true that every member of this band has an insane fascination with the Who, but the thing is we're not just into the particular phase that most of the Mod kids are into. We appreciate all the bands the Who took money from."

"We go to (mod nights) because those are really the only other kids besides, like, emo-core kids that are really obsessive about music and really just like music a whole lot," adds Ken. "It's a fun little scene for that aspect, a bunch of people just going to a place and listening to a bunch of, like, Booker T. Besides that nobody else is ever really gonna want to hear."

In a way, the Damn Personals have built their own scene with friends from Connecticut moving up to Boston. Says Ken, "We have a very tight unit of friends, the four of us, and a bunch of other people.. and we have a network of friends and it just doesn't feel right if not everyone's around."

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From the mean streets of Boston, it's

The Ducky Boys

by Mike Ramek

Mark Lind- Bass, lead vocals
Mike Marsden- Rhythm guitar, vocals
Mike O'Leary- Rhythm guitar, vocals
Jason Messina- drums, vocals

Nowadays, it seems that everything punk requires categorization of some sort: '77, Oi!, new school, old school, melodic, metallic, emo, straightedge, vegan, crust, pop... And with each genre-specific band comes the obligatory (and exclusionary) genre-specific fashions and cliques....

The Ducky Boys don't give a crap about all that. They don't have to.

I've seen kids with all styles of apparel and hair length tear it up on the dancefloor while these guys did their thing. Their style - power chord-driven singalong melodies with proud, working class undertones - transcends all genres and "scene" boundaries. Their secret? A lot of heart, a singularly aggressive & raw rock'n'roll sound, and down to earth lyrics that deal with life's daily hardships and triumphs.

Hailing from the tough urban environs of Boston, the band has currently put out two rippin' albums on GMM records, a new live EP on Outsider records, and have also appeared on a bunch of excellent comps in the past (including the awesome new *Scene Killer* comp on Outsider).

Whether they're furiously blasting out their classic anthems like "Pride", "I'll Rise Up", "White Slum", "These Are the Days", and "I've Got My Friends", shredding through brand new stuff like "It's With You", and "Boston, USA", or covering "Razors In The Night" by Blitz, or Dion's "The Wanderer", you can be sure they're doing it with unparalleled conviction and energy. Don't call em '77 punk, Oi!, or anything else. These guys like to keep it simple. It's just heartfelt, honest rock'n'roll from the streets for kids like you and me. I had a chance to talk to bassist/vocalist Mark Lind.

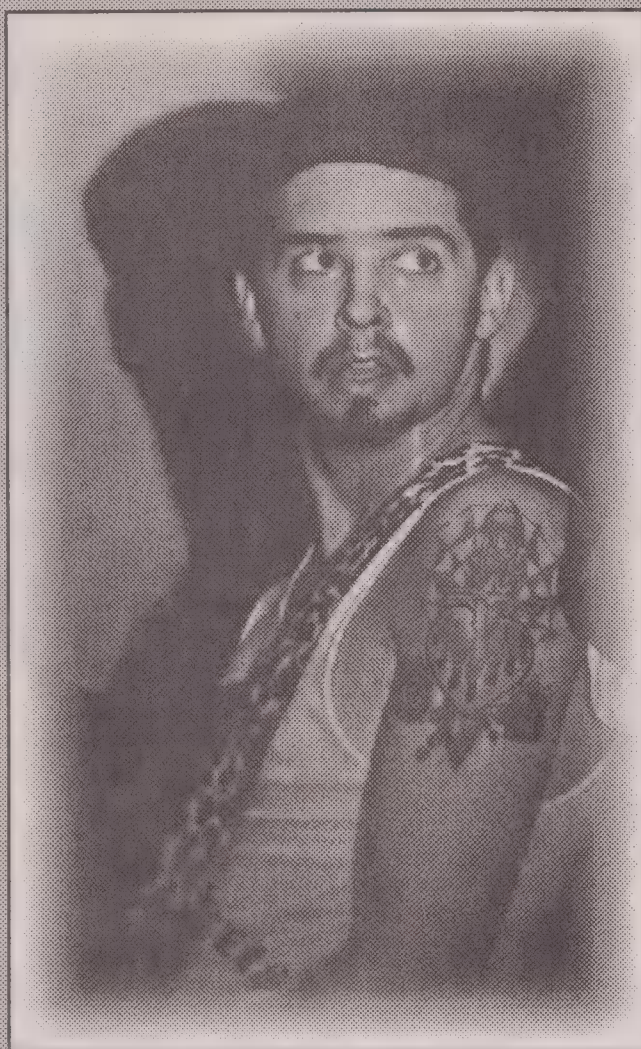


Photo by Kristin Forbes

Poor man's rock 'n' roll

Q: I guess I'd better ask how you guys got started.

Mark: there really ~~was~~ no "getting started" to it. We weren't in other bands before....at least the original three piece members weren't. We never said "let's get a band going". It was more like "let's get together and play our guitars" and look what ~~we~~ have now. We started doing a few Misfits, Sex Pistols songs. Soon ~~we~~ stumbled upon some Rancid where ~~we~~ did the back-and-forth vocal thing and found that me and ~~Mark~~ worked good together. That's where we started....

Q: You guys hail from Charlestown, MA. Is there a scene down there? How has that urban environment shaped your music and outlook on life?

Mark: I guess your surroundings form your world view, but nowadays, Charlestown has nothing to do with my lyrics..... there's no "scene" in charlestown. Charlestown is just a neighborhood in Boston. The people there ~~are~~ more concerned with shooting dope than what we're doing. I'll be happy to leave ~~it~~ behind one day.

Q: What were some of your main musical influences growing up?

Mark: I guess "growing up" is the key phrase there. I'd say Guns N' Roses, AC/DC and the like. I recently ~~read~~ Al's column in HIT LIST where he said that he didn't like ~~the~~ fact that today's younger bands are into those bands, but we're all products of the late 80's/early 90's hard rock scene. I'd consider that stuff ~~to~~ have a HUGE impact on our writing.

Q: There seems to be a strong rock'n'roll feel to a lot of your music. I saw you guys live when you covered stuff like "The Wanderer", and "Stand By Me". You guys also play a cover of CCR's "Bad Moon Rising". Also, I hear ~~your~~ solid rock riffing incorporated into your style. Is there any special reason for this distinct sound, or is that just one style of music you grew up with?

Mark: It's just where ~~we~~ come from. Our style of picking or strumming our guitars is our sound. Like I said, our influences ~~are~~ those rock bands so it's a natural thing. Within two years, the hard rock thing is going to explode. When it happens we'll still be doing our thing so listen to today's bands and then see what they're doing then...and remember ~~we~~ ~~were~~ here first!

Q: Many of your songs (especially on 'No Gettin' Out') seem to focus on a struggle to survive on a day-to-day basis. Not really even to be successful, but just to make it through the day feeling alright about yourself with your head held up high. Has this been a personal daily struggle you have gone through a lot of your life?

Mark: I feel ~~that~~ the lyrics ~~are~~ as articulate as I want to make them. Nowadays, accepting that "No Gettin Out" exists is a daily struggle unto itself...heh heh.

Q: Does the song "Ill Rise Up" refer to some particular incident in time, or is it ~~more~~ a broad sentiment of survival and triumph? Does it ~~refer~~ to anything specific?

~~Mark~~: It, of course, refers to something specific in my mind but, like I said, I chose not to go further into detail. People should be able to ~~hear~~ ~~the~~ song so me telling specifics would ruin that potential for them. I can just say that the whole first record ~~was~~ written ~~in~~ I ~~was~~

"WE ARE A STREET ROCK BAND....ROCK N' ROLL FROM THE STREETS. WORKING CLASS? I WORK NO JOB.

I PLAY A GUITAR AND TRAVEL FROM TOWN TO TOWN. MY FATHER AND EVERYONE BEFORE HIM IS WORKING CLASS....

ONE DAY I WILL WORK A SHITTY JOB. YOU TELL ME IF THAT'S WORKING CLASS."



"PUNK IS GOING TO EAT ITSELF. EVERYONE IS TOO SELF RIGHTEOUS AND JUDGMENTAL.

EVERYONE WILL BE GOING "ROCK N' ROLL" WITHIN TWO YEARS. PEOPLE HAVE TO REALIZE THAT 'PUNK' IS JUST A WORD.

THIS IS ONLY POOR MAN'S ROCK N' ROLL. THE LAME NAMES HAVE TO BE DROPPED."

coming out of high school where I was not very well accepted. There is a lot of anger and hostility in those lyrics towards real people.

Q: "Always Be There" is a song about your brother, guitarist for Blood For Blood. The song itself is really uplifting, though it speaks of tough times you went through together. These tough times obviously influenced you guys differently in a lyrical sense, the Ducky Boys message seems uplifting and hopeful while B for B is more pessimistic, downtrodden and angry....

Mark: I really can't speak for him. "Always Be there" was written out of guilt. I was bummed out with my weaknesses. I let my brother down in a time when he needed support and that song was an apology and a pledge never to do it again. I remember almost crying out of shame when I first played the recorded version of that song for him.

Q: The song "White Slum" is an embrace of (I think) your neighborhood, or a place in which you grew up. Do you guys identify very with your place in this working class neighborhood, feel a sense of belonging? Tell me a little about that neighborhood.

Mark: Well, this is why I love music. What the song began as and how it is perceived is totally different. The summer before those lyrics were written was a boring one for me. I used to stay up all night and walk around the town at 4 or 5am. Coincidentally, a friend of ours was doing the same thing....only, while I was watching the sun rise, he was smashing up the yuppies' cars....there you get "rip it to the floor and kill it" etc. I'm not proud of where I come from because they aren't proud of me. I'm proud of myself for not being what is expected out of our town. It is a white trash ghetto....but it's home to me!....and I'm not one of them! That's what it means. I don't and never have felt a sense of belonging there.

Q: In reference to the last question, do you guys consider yourself a "working class" band?

Mark: We are a rock band....rock n' roll from the streets. Working class? I work no job. I play guitar and travel from town to town. My father and everyone before him is working class....one day I will work a shitty job. You tell me if that's working class.

Q: Do you guys adhere to any specific cross-punk genre categorization (Oi!, Streetpunk, etc.) or do you reject such classifications? It seems many bands today feel the need to group themselves.

Mark: Our song "It Starts With You" says "there's a punker and a skin, where should I begin? They're saying we ain't punk enough. Fellas, don't you know it's only rock n' roll on the streets back where it belongs?" Enough said.

Q: What's your take on the direction the punk scene is taking today?

Mark: It's going to eat itself. Everyone is too self righteous and judgmental. Everyone will be going "rock n' roll" within two years. People have to realize that "punk" is just a word. This is only poor man's rock n' roll. The lame names have to be dropped.

Q: The scene is obviously larger and more diverse than ever before. Where do you see your place in the it?

Mark: We don't feel a need to fit in with a "scene". We're doing what we're doing and people will either like it or not. I feel to be a very strong part of the Boston scene but at the same time I read crap posted on the Boston Punk Page... people slagging us and other bands, and I just want nothing to do with it all. I don't know....ask me again tomorrow.

Q: Getting back to your albums, the lyrics in *Dark Days* seem of a more blatantly personal nature than those of *No Getting Out*. "Do

You Wrong" seems to be about someone's father, and paints a picture of that father figure looking down from above on all you have done. In the song, You question yourself about whether you have "blackened the name my father gave to me." What does this refer to?

Mark: "Do You Wrong" is about Mike (guitarist for Ducky Boys)'s dad. He's dead now and he was a well respected person while he was alive...he was a very good guy. Mike is singing about his own imperfections and questioning whether or not those vices undo all his father had done for good in his life by smudging the family name.

Q: The song "Fourteen" seems to refer to a pivotal tragic moment in your life. What were those "Fourteen Years of Hell"?

Mark: The "hell" is misdirection, bad example and the like. People like if we were in jail for 14 years.... which would have made me a convict at age eight. The song is about the collapse of my family but is really about how life goes wrong for everyone. Not everyone has the white picket fence with the dog running in the front yard.

Q: In addition to the sorrowful tunes, songs like "Pride," "I'll Rise Up," "All For One and One For All," and "I've Got My Friends" seem triumphant and uplifting in nature. Has a sense of belonging and pride proved a remedy for a lot of life's pitfalls for you?

MARK: Sometimes....

Q: You guys were featured on the *I've Got My Friends* comp in '96 (where I first heard you), and have since contributed an excellent Blitz cover to the new Outsider Records *Scene Killer* comp. Are there any plans to appear on any compilations in the future?

Mark: Of course....that's how you get known. We've done tons of comps and we're always looking to do more. Next one we'll record for is *Scene Killer 2*.

Q: Well, you guys have two albums out, and you just came out with a live EP. What's in the future for you guys? A new album soon?

Mark: Eventually. It's almost completely written but it needs more time. I vow to be content with the finished product on this one before anyone hears it.

Q: When I saw you guys live, you played a new one called "Boston, USA," seemingly about pride in your hometown.... is that gonna be on an upcoming release? How 'bout the "Stand By Me" cover?

Mark: "Boston, USA" isn't really about pride in the city. Verse One is about coming home from a road trip with the band. Verse Two is about me and my friend Mark Vieira at the DeliHaus in Kenmore Square and the night I sprained my ankle at the Anti-Flag show and still brought my drunken ass to the liquor store on foot for another 40. And Verse Three is about me getting dumped. I guess there's a little city pride involved but it's more about pride in my life at the time it was written. That song will be released on the next record. As for "Stand By Me", it's recorded but we'll see if it ever comes out.

Q: I recently saw two shows (Coney High, and a NJ American Legion Hall), and this tour definitely has one of the best tour lineups I've ever seen! You guys, Oxymoron, and the Dropkicks complement each other's styles really well! How's the tour going for you guys so far?

Mark: Fuckin great!!!! I'm so glad we met Oxymoron. They asked us to come to Europe next Spring and tour with them and being on the road with Dropkicks makes us feel like we're still at home.

DUCKY BOYS, PO Box 425564, Cambridge MA 02141 USA
E-mail: duckyboys@duckyboys.com

the lillingtons

Interview by Oliver Lyons
Photos by Ricky Saporta

L-I-L-L-I-N-G-T-O-N-S! Are the letters shouted at you from the first song of the bands 1996 LP, Shit Out of Luck. "Great", you say, another band trying to be the Ramones. While The Lillingtons are not the Ramones, they're strong contenders for second place. Simple three-chord punk rock at its finest with lyrics ranging from having one's nether regions being itchy to robotic takeovers. Fronted by one of the most powerful singers I've heard in a long time, The Lillingtons will stomp all over your mortal, suburban face so you'd better get ready. They have a new album out on Panic Button records, Death By Television, and spent the early part of the Spring on tour with the Teen Idols. This interview was conducted mid-May in their tour van which was illegally parked in front of Coney Island High. Punk rock!

Q: To start off, say who you are and what you play, just to make my life easier.

Kody: I'm Kody and I play guitar and sing.

Tim: Tim, I play the drums

Corey: Corey, I play bass.

Q: How is it being on Panic Button? How's that going so far?

K: It's going good, they [redacted] us really good.

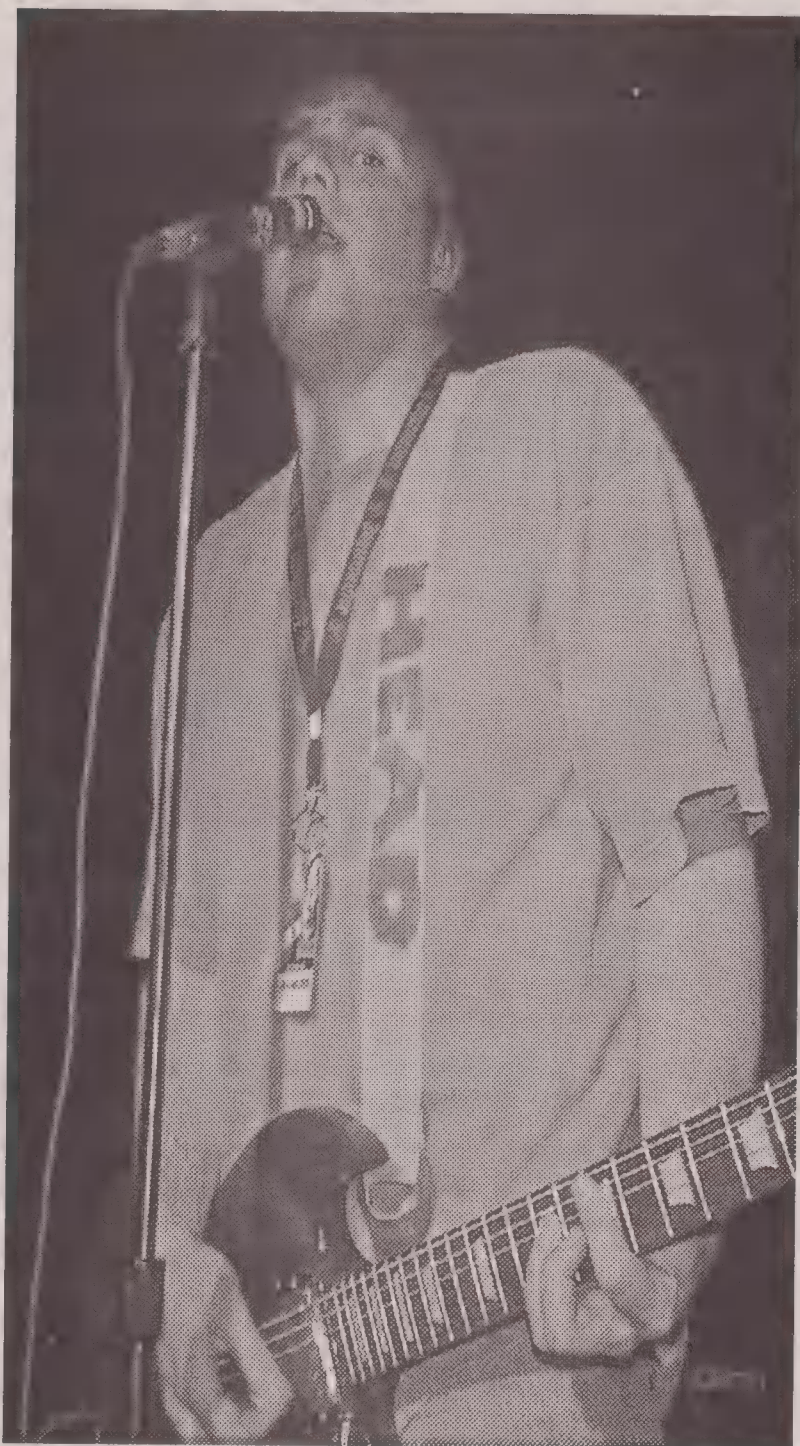
Q: Now your last album was on Clearview how come the new album isn't?

K: Well they said they weren't going to do the [redacted] anymore and we [redacted] going to shop around anyway. So we just sent out demos and nobody wanted to record the new album so we just recorded it ourselves and Mass (Giorgini, owner of Sonic Iguana Studios where their new album was recorded) showed it to Ben (Weasel, no explanation needed) and he liked it.

Q: So does the new album reflect a more, "mature" side of the band? You go from writing songs with verses like, "my genitals itch" to "my life has been a waste of time." Is this a darker, deeper more mysterious Lillingtons that [redacted] emerging?

K: Funner (laughs).

C: More mature.





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K: All the old songs were a bunch of bullshit anyway so we thought we might as well write about something good.

C: Sci-fi and shit. We got sick of writing about girls and broken heart love stories.

Q: Do you think pop-punk is a good way to classify your guys music? I don't think you fall much into that category but that's how I've heard you described. How would you label yourselves?

K: I don't want to be labeled pop-punk. That's kinda why we switched from writing chick songs. I don't know...We're rock n' roll I guess.

C: Good music. You can pick out the differences between pop-punk and stuff that's more musical and has harmonies. That's why we wrote the new record. We were tired of that shit. We don't want to be associated with a lot of it. But everybody who has come out for this tour has wanted to hear the old stuff.

T: That, "Lillington High" crap.

Q: But that's a great song, you don't like it just because you got tired of playing it?

C: Probably, well, I don't think I've ever been a big fan of it (laughs).

Q: Good stuff. Joe Queer produced your first 7". How'd you hook up with him?

K: I called him, I don't even remember what for. I got his phone number and ended up talking to him. I told him that I was in a band and I gave him a tape and he liked it. He was gonna start his own label and we were gonna be on that so we went out and recorded the 7". It turned out that his label didn't happen so he called Todd from Clearview and had him put it out.

Q: But you were on the, "More Bounce to the Ounce" comp?

T: Yeah, he was kinda helping us out for not doing the label.

Q: Kody, where do you get your singing style from? Your voice has a very Smoking Popes type of sound.

(Everybody laughs)

K: (laughs) I've never even heard the Smoking Popes.

Q: You get that a lot?

K: Yeah, everybody says that. In Maximum they say that all the time. (Producer) Mass (Giorgini) says it too.

Q: The Popes are pretty good, take that as a compliment. You project though, which is rare. Most bands fall back on the Joey Vindictive nasal whine.

K: I don't know I just sing (laughs). I haven't taken lessons. I was in choir in school, that's about it.

Q: What's the scene like in Wyoming?

C: There's not a scene.

T: There was at one time but just like anything else it gets big and then dies off and right now it's dying off.

Q: Are there any good bands out there you wanna name?

T: Homeless Wonders are really cool guys. They're from Laramie, Wyoming.

K: That's about it.

Q: Any memorable shows so far? Any in particular stand out?

C: Everyone is memorable.

T: Everyone.

C: Tell him about Ironwood

T: You tell him.



C: You tell him, I'm eating!

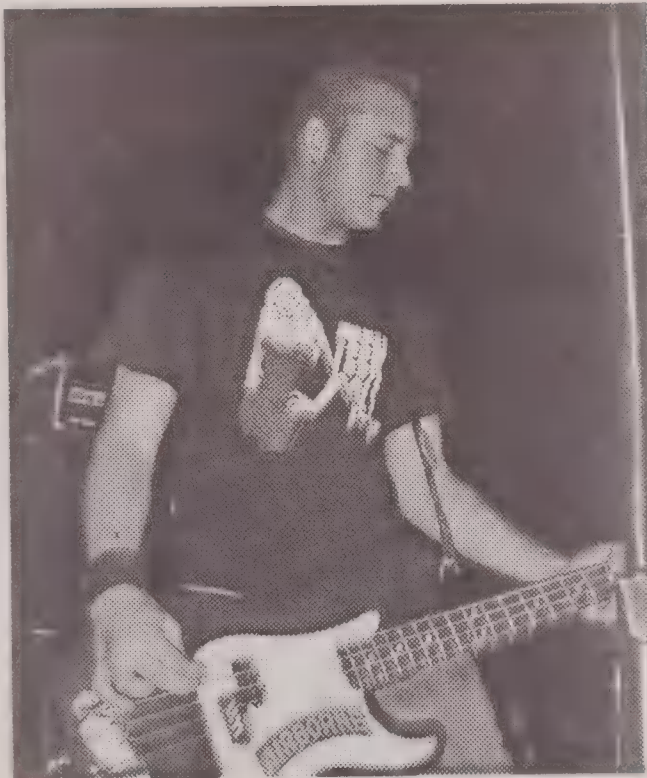
T: We played this place, Ironwood, Michigan. It was weird. We played in the basement of this record store and the record store only had...

C: Two records in it (laughs). Ratlab records?

T: Labrat Records. It was weird. It was like the Twilight Zone when we rolled up. Nobody was around. It was like a second hand store that carried records 'cause there were only two milk crates with records and CD's. The stuff they were selling were just punk patches ironed on to store bought hats and all their shirts were just from bands who played through there.

C: Nobody in the town would come outside. Well, a few people but there was nobody around. Supposedly it was a town of ten thousand people, but then we got there. Whooo. Nobody. Weird.

K: The promoters son kept dragging the Teen Idols equipment



around and dropping it...bothering Heather (Idols bass player). We wouldn't let him touch our stuff. His [redacted] got him thinking that if he hauls [redacted] lot of stuff someone will offer to take him out on tour as [redacted] roadie.

T: (Laughs)What're you talking about?

K: That's what he was saying!

T: The Rat Cellar, that [redacted] the most memorable.

Q: So is this as far [redacted] you guys have ever been before?

K: Yeah, the outskirts of Philadelphia is the closest we've been before this.

C: We've been to New Hampshire.

K: Yeah, [redacted] out to Boston and Joe drove [redacted] up [redacted] New Hampshire. That's the [redacted] we've been.

Q: Are you guys really planning to tour for the [redacted] of the year?

K: Yeah, if [redacted] hook it up. We wanna tour [redacted] much as possible.

Q: [redacted] working.

C: Oh Yeah...wayyyy better than working.

K: If [redacted] weren't touring we'd probably not be able to do this because Tim lives in a different town and it's hard [redacted] line up schedules to practice [redacted] everything.

C: Plus there's no jobs out there so if you quit your job your screwed.

T: Kody worked in a grocery store, Corey worked in an oil fill and I worked in [redacted] coal mine and between our twelve hour days, schedules [redacted] a lot of havoc.

Q: So none of you have actually worked [redacted] Dairy Queen?

K: Nope, all bullshit..it makes for a nice rhyme.

C: I wouldn't want to.

Q: So what's the song , "The Day I Went Away", about?

K: Corey's college days.

C: I went to college for a year and hated it. It [redacted] fucked up. I had a BAD year and it took me awhile to get over that. It sucked.

Q: What's your favorite line from, Rock N' Roll High School?

K: (In [redacted] Joey Ramone slur) "Rock n' roll high school?"...(laughs). I don't know.

T: I like it when [redacted] Randle's in the shower.(laughs)

Q: Well that's it, any [redacted] words?

T: Thanks for the interview.

Q: No problem, happy to help.

C: Check out the Teen Idols, they're [redacted].

Q: Plan to.

For [redacted] reason the band thought that [redacted] was funny.

Write to the Lillingtons, 3291 Cactus Drive, #50 Newcastle, WY 82701. Check out their website at: www.angelfire.com/wy/lillingtons

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Matterhorn is a Bay area band that is starting to make a big noise, with their loud, abrasive in-your-face sound. I've known their new singer Scott Carter since my days back in Baltimore, and you know if Scott is involved in something, it's gonna be good. They are playing at a newly re-opened Oakland club called the Stork Club, and my tape recorder and the guys and a twelve pack of Bud in their van, got acquainted before they rocked the fuckin' house. So with no further adieu I present to you Matterhorn.

Interview & photos by Howie K.

S: [redacted] - Throat

[redacted] - Bass

[redacted] - Guitar

[redacted] is the drummer who isn't here yet.

Q: How long has Matterhorn been a band?

R: This incarnation w/ Scott has been together for six months.

S: Originally the band had two guitarists and Rob was singing, and Marty the other guitarist was moving to New York and Rob wanted to become just a super-rockin' guitar player and well....

Q: Now Scott, you've been in a lot of punk bands back in the Baltimore/DC area..

S: Yeah, [redacted] many fuckin' bands - Freak Beans, Glaze Ride, and then out here in Oakland, Saint James Infirmary.

Q: So except for Scott, all you guys are from the Bay area?

R: Yeah, I grew up in San Francisco, our drummer Ed grew up in San Francisco.

M: Walnut Creek.

Q: The tuff streets of Walnut Creek. (laughs)

M: Actually Walnut Creek was pretty sick, I lived next to PTC and Verbal Abuse [redacted] Attitude Adjustment.

Q: Really?

S: And from Baltimore where if beer is shitty and the girls are ugly.

Q: That's why you moved out here. (laughs) I heard one of you guys played in [redacted] with Harley from the Cro-Mags.

R: Yeah, Ed [redacted] me.

Q: What was [redacted] like?

R: He's a really cool guy, I know him from New York, we played in band together called [redacted] Love Church.

Q: I saw the Cro-Mags when I was fourteen in Baltimore, they [redacted] So now that Scott is in the band, does it feel like a new band?

R: It's a lot different, I like it a lot more.

S: (Yelling) We're a much better band since we kicked that Marty motherfucker out.... (Laughs; Marty is out side at the van, and precedes to punch it)

M: It's a lot tighter. (Marty hits it again) (More laughs)

Q: So you guys pretty much grew up on punk and hardcore?

Matterhorn



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M: Metal, punk, and goth, it was all hand in hand out here, it was totally the same.

R: Motorhead, AC/DC

S: Metal, punk

Q: You're a big Warrant fan, right?

R: Hey you makin' fun of my Warrant hat? I got it for my birthday.

Q: Holy shit! I didn't even see that on you hat! (laughs)

M: We've got a metal cover band called The Shattered Chalis, we cover all glam songs and wear make up.

Q: No way, that's hilarious.

M: Yeah, we play out every once in a while.

Q: So what do you find yourselves listening to these days?

S: The stuff when we were fifteen.

M: The new Napalm Death is awesome, and the new SpaceBoy is great.

R: The Bar Feeders.

S: I listen to a lot of Willie Nelson, AC/DC.....

Q: So are you guys going to be releasing a record soon?

R: That's our main goal right now, as well as touring.

S: Everything is starting to come together, new material, get the master plan together and destroy the fuckin' world.

Q: Does everybody contribute to the song writing?

M: It's all pretty equal, somebody will come in with part, we'll rip it to shreds and then everybody puts in their own input.

Q: Is there a buzz out there about you guys yet? Do you have a local following?

S: We do really well in San Francisco.

M: I think we're one of the better bands in San Francisco at this point.

Q: What bands do you play with on a regular basis?

S: We play with Old Grandad a lot.

M: The Bar Feeders, Artemis Pile.

S: Pig Iron, heavy shit man.

M: Tonight is the first night we've played in the East Bay, we usually play in the city.

S: We're playing at a drag bar in June.

Q: Really.

S: Yeah for shits and giggles.

R: A little bit of San Francisco fun.

M: Yeah, Pig Iron played there last week, and I tell you, Ron in a

dress is ugly, put that in an interview. (laughs) And he pulled up his dress and he was wearing no panties.

Q: Wow, that must have been a high point. (laughs)

M: Oh, it was awful.

Q: So who would like you guys? I mean, what are some bands you feel like you have something in common with.

S: AC/DC, Motorhead, Scratch Acid, Circus Lupus, just heavy intense, real shit, whatever all that means.

R: VoIVod.

M: Touch & Go bands, before they started playing keyboards.

S: Yeah we love Mule and Laughing Hyenas, shit like that.



M: A big buncha rock.

Q: So are you guys serious about the band?

S: It's the kind of thing we want to do all the time. I've only been in about six months, but I've had more fun in this band, than I've had with a band in a long time. It's a good time.

M: It's an excuse to get together and get wasted. (laughs)

Q: Do you play all new stuff?

S: We play four old ones and I've started to write some stuff, and I'm sure eventually we'll write some stuff together.

Q: What do you write about?

S: Same kind of stuff I was in Saint James. Just whatever is in my head that I'm venting about at the time, that just comes out.

Q: What about the name MatterHorn, why MatterHorn?

M: Oh, the name, I hate the name, yeah it's me Matt and I said I hate the name.

R: I like it, it's all mountain, the biggest hunk of roooooooooooooock! (laughs)

Q: To me it's got the same feel as Thin Lizzy, Man-Rock, no wimpy shit involved, ya know what I'm saying.

M: Hey that's us, I think I like it now. (laughs)

Q: Yeah, when I was in high school my friend and I came up with theory that metal was descended from the Vikings, hence Viking Rock, like Matterhorn. (laughs)

S: We are Viking Rock!

Q: What can we expect from Matterhorn in the future?

S: We'll be out on tour and on the east coast by the fall and hopefully have a CD by September as well, and we got a lot homies in New York and Baltimore, so we just want to get out there to hang out too.

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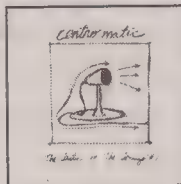
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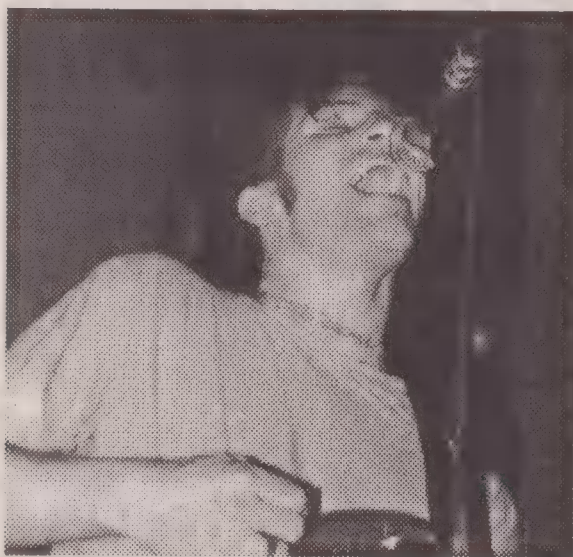
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Garrison is ■ Boston band composed primarily of displaced kids from Worcester, MA. As of this writing, they haven't been a functioning band for a year yet, but in the eleven-or-so months they've been around, they've played Boston and the rest of the East Coast ■ whole lot and have evolved in leaps and bounds.

By the time you read this, there will be a new Garrison EP entitled "The Bend Before The Break," out on Revelation, and an eponymous 7-inch on Boston's Espo Records. This interview ■■■ conducted on the evening of May 29th, 1999 after Garrison rocked my folks' porch in Concord, New Hampshire. Joseph Grillo sings and plays guitar, and Andy White plays bass. Ed McNamara (vocals/guitar) and Guy D'Annolfo (drums) were outside.

Interview by Mike Fournier

Photos by Rich Ladew.



GARRISON

Storming the barricades of scholastic punk rock

Q: The first time I ever ■■■ you guys was ■■■ lat year on June 29th, which was the day after Joe's last band, Stricken for Catherine, broke up. This year I'm going to see you on June 28th, which is the year anniversary, and in that year's time you signed to Revelation and put out ■ record and toured ■ least three or four times. Does that seem a little fast to you?

JOE: Yeah, it ■■■ very fast, but Ed and I were planning before we had Guy and Andrew. We'd talked about this band and had been playing for a long time. We had been in bands before and learned a lot from mistakes and how to do things and the order to do them in. So, by the time Andy and Guy and Ed and I were ready to play our first show, we had nineteen shows booked and a tour pretty much underway and a demo tape done. We were just ready to really go at it...we had been in bands before where it seems like we'd take two steps forward and three steps back all of the time. We have just been trying to constantly keep ahead of things.... Andy does almost all of our graphic design stuff and the website and has been instrumental in finding us places to play. We all work almost every single day, if we're not playing, to do certain things for the band. That helps to make things go very quickly.

Q: Andy, was your whole band experience similar? I know that you weren't really part of the whole Worcester thing that Ed and Joe and Guy were... you were in Pittsburgh....

ANDY: I went to school in Pittsburgh when that whole thing was going on. I ■■■ involved in the Pittsburgh scene when I went to school at Carnegie-Mellon. There ■■■ a lot of bands like Hurl, Karl Hendricks Trio, Blunderbuss, Don Caballero and Davenport playing.... it was similar to the Worcester thing, I guess. I played in a band called Crome Yellow and I was a disc jockey at the local college radio station and all that. We didn't do much touring. I hadn't really planned on moving back to Worcester; it just sorta happened. That's how I met Ed, at the Space. I got in the band when Ed heard ■ demo tape I did on guitar and Ed asked if I could do some bass playing for the summer. It just sorta turned into a longer-term thing.

Q: I know that you have academics on the front burner, and Guy does, too. It seems a little weird to me that the rhythm section of this rock band is....

JOE:very intelligent?

Q:so dedicated to scholastics and playing rock at the same time.

ANDY: Well, I think scholastics is a misnomer. I just received my master's in psychology last week and I'm going to get my doctorate eventually. I don't think it's really an issue of liking scholastics or academics. It's a question of our fields. Guy's an English student and I am a psychology and psychiatry student, and for what I want to do I need to get my doctorate. It's been difficult balancing the two and I'm ■■■ it will be an ongoing problem. Guy and I can't tour as much as we want to because of duties to school. This summer I have to cut short out of one of the tours to speak at a few conferences, in August. It should be easier now that we're out of school, for the summer. I shift priorities from school to music depending on how busy the week is.

JOE: We've also realized, too, right from the get-go, both Andy and Guy were very into their studies. It's such a priority in their lives that we knew right at the beginning the place that it played and that they weren't going to be spending the next eight months out of a year sleeping on people's floors, going around playing shows. Ed and I try and be very conscious of building stuff around that. We try and be careful about shows we play and when we schedule things. It's interesting.... because they are going to school, it works out that most of our touring happens during school breaks, which couldn't be better.

Q: Let's completely change gears here and talk about the songwriting process. There are exceptions, but most of your songs seem to adhere to a really strict pop format. It's interesting to me because both of your bands before didn't use that format....the songs were really technical and long. Where does the change come from? Is it a conscious thing, trying to distance yourself from where you were before?

JOE: Yeah. I mean, it's a very conscious thing. Before Andy and Guy were playing with us, Ed and I were just hanging out, writing songs, and we were both in these bands that had epic, very complex, all-over-the-place songs, and I think that we really wanted to challenge ourselves and see if we could write really good, interesting pop/rock songs. We've experimented before, in a multitude of different ways. It's a challenge to take forms that are somewhat standard and not necessarily write standard songs. I think we try to write songs that are very interesting and have a lot going on....but honesty is a big thing. If a song's honest and coming from the heart, it can be the most technical thing...I mean, there are some Rodan songs or Rachel's songs that are gorgeous, technically amazing, and you can tell they're right from the heart. But there's also Operation Ivy songs with two parts that's also right from the heart. To me, it's the same thing.

Q: So how does honesty come into play lyrically? I think you tend to sing more about situations than specifics.

JOE: Lyricwise, I tend to harp around a few certain issues, mainly about trying to deal with stuff that has happened in the past, trying to be mentally of the present. If I can sing a song and make them feel that they're not alone in what they're going through, that's the best. If someone has a good time and feels like they can relate to what I'm saying, that's great.

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Is It Ska Yet?

The Jersey Beat Ska Report



by Chuck X. Wharton

I keep hearing scary rumors of trouble ■ record companies important to ska. I've also ■■■■■■■■■■ recent final concerts of several ■■■ bands I love, especially ■■■ Jersey's The Royalties, although several of those members continue ■■■ perform other musical genres.

At ■■■■ like this, I don't seek comfort, but instead seek a pillar of permanence, strength and musical devotion. In New Jersey, one such pillar is Inspector 7. These six soldiers ■■■■ Giuseppe Mancini with vocals and noise toys, The Lovely Miss Stephanie on keyboards, Lord Skoochie on tenor saxophone, The Ace on bass, Jay Boxcar on drums, Tim King Predator Boyce with guitars and the mysterious T. Dog, the Sinister Minister providing vocals.

Their ■■■■ on Radical Records, reviewed in this column, is *Banished To Bogeyland*. I ■■■■ T. Dog to explain ■■■■ is happening. He assures ■■■■ that as long as ■■■■ depend ■■■■ bands like Inspector 7, we'll get all the ska ■■■■ need.

"We started this for fun and the love of the music but always intended to ■■■■ it as far ■■■■ could whether ska ■■■■ in or not," T. Dog explains.

"Ska was still quite underground when ■■■■ began. Not to discredit bands such ■■■■ Bigger Thomas that ■■■■ around when we began, but it seemed that within a couple years after ■■■■ began ska bands started sprouting up like weeds in Jersey. Some of it may be ■■■■ direct result of our exposure and some ■■■■ surely ■■■■ result of ska's waxing popularity in general ■■■■ the time. A lot of these weeds have been dying off just as rapidly ■■■■ they popped up now that ska's not as in ■■■■ it ■■■■ couple years ago."

T. Dog's musical experience includes a punk band when he ■■■■ in high school. He joined Inspector 7 ■■■■ ■■■■ original members' invitation, drawn by his devotion to ■■■■ music ■■■■ fan.

"I joined the ■■■■ about ■■■■ year after they ■■■■ began jamming (they were then called Agent 86). I knew all of them from the scene and shows around Jersey. I moved up to New Brunswick in 1992 and lived down the street from Stephanie's house (The Gingerbread House ■■■■ call it).

"Walking up ■■■■ down the street, on ■■■■ way home from the bar ■■■■ whatever, I'd hear them practicing in the basement. <I— (9:51:13 PM)—>When they started performing I would always go out and support them no matter how they sounded because I was so glad to see another local band playing ■■■■ — ■■■■ REAL ■■■■ at that! The only other ska band around ■■■■ that time to my knowledge ■■■■ Bigger Thomas and it was refreshing to ■■■■ people trying to revive that scene.

"Eventually, ■■■■ watching my drunken ■■■■ on the dance floor, they figured ■■■■ have good stage presence and asked me to join ■■■■ a Toaster or ■■■■ shit like that. At first I said, 'hell no!' because I figured they just wanted me up there jumping around ■■■■ ■■■■ monkey yelling 'Pickitup-pickitup-pickitup!' like the Flava Flav of ■■■■ or some shit. But they said I could write my own stuff and ■■■■ be a duo type of thing so I ■■■■ in on ■■■■ practices, did my first show with them ■■■■ the Melody Bar ■■■■ in New Brunswick, and it just clicked. ■■■■ worked well together."

The result — ■■■■ musical experience ■■■■ explodes beyond third-wave ska, while true to ■■■■ music's roots. Each recording, whether ■■■■ CD like their latest or their split 7-inch ■■■■ traditional skinhead ska from The Skoidats, reveals ■■■■ great synergy of the members' styles.

"We did branch out ■■■■ ■■■■ musically on *Banished To Bogeyland*. We didn't necessarily decide to, that's just how the songs ■■■■ out when ■■■■

wrote them. As far ■■■■ the lyrics ■■■■ concerned we've always been a bit more on the dark side both lyrically and musically. We're just not into the happy-poppy ska sound and theme that's usually more prevalent in ska. We also come from a lot of different musical backgrounds individually. Having skins in ■■■■ band and relating to skins, a working class song was bound to emerge!"

The songs range from "Quick Work," celebrating the working-class with ska, but with lyrics that Woody Guthrie would have ■■■■ — to "Asbury Park," painting a grim picture of addicts and unwed mothers. Also, there ■■■■ instrumentals serving as musical poems depicting the urban environment, among other themes.

"We let the songs just come together with each individual's influence added. That's why ■■■■ songs work so well and others never make ■■■■ out of the rehearsal studio — those where the individual influences don't gel together."



Inspector 7

One dynamo in the musical synthesis has been guitarist King Predator. "Predator had just joined the band when ■■■■ recorded *The Infamous*. ■■■■ year and ■■■■ half later he had developed ■■■■ much more comfortably experimental style and put it on display very noticeably (and well) on *Banished To Bogeyland*. He just went nuts and kicked it.

"More than likely, ■■■■ far as outside influences go, we'll probably keep working with the ■■■■ ones we have in the past, such ■■■■ jazz, Oil/punk, and hardcore. We may perhaps introduce more reggae influence in our music then in the past. Who knows? Like I said, with the various backgrounds and imaginations of ■■■■ various members of the band we could come from any direction."

Freetown - Painless (Beatville Records, PO Box 42462, Washington DC 20015) The band wants to bill its members as highly talented. That's ok, because they have the music and musicianship to back it up. Their 13-track debut disc is a chain with very few weak links. Influencing their ska is soul, West Africa and rootsy rock. Among the treasures you'll find are an engaging dub, *The Day*, and a fun reggae, *Skinhead Girl*. Highly accessible stuff with a low-learning curve.

David Hillyard And The Rocksteady Seven - Playtime (Hellcat Records) The artist attempts to convey his realization of the United States' hidden musical history, as reflected in Jamaican jazz. He certainly succeeds with this collection of nearly one hour of music. From the first track, which puts you sonically in New Orleans' French Quarter street at midday, before a group of musicians playing for your pennies, the musicians carry us through a soundscape of ska, rocksteady and reggae. Other than warning you there's a surprising interpretation of The Beatles' *Norwegian Wood*, the best I can advise you is to set aside about one hour for some rootsy, beautiful stuff.

Inspector 7 - Banished to Bogeyland (Radical Records) I am irresistibly drawn to the darkest poetry in these 13 tracks. I am not talking about the revisitation of their theme *Shape in Reshape*, but their examination of the seamy life in Asbury Park, dope addicts, and murder in *Beyond Recognition*. There's beautiful music to be had in this recording, also. But once, when a newspaper reporter I covered a traffic accident, a passing motorist asked what I could do to fix the traffic conditions. I told her I could report the everyone the need to do something. Besides entertaining us exquisitely, the band has reported to us trouble in Bogeyland. Let's do something about it. Plus, you'll find guitar work you've heard in an Inspector 7 recording before.

Israel Vibration - Pay The Piper (Ras Records) The musical strength of this recording comes from the excellent songwriting in all the traditional Jamaican styles, plus the instrumentals of the Roots Radics Band. The title tune says it all, "Time to pay the piper, Mr. Rip and Run Off." If you're

needing rootsy and rocksteady with a Rastafarian slant, you can't do better than this combination.

MU330 (Asian Records) I'm always thrilled by releases from this band. This one needn't have been so hard in some of the tracks. Ska doesn't have to be hard to be good. But when MU330 gets this hard, it's damned good. The band reaches its pinnacle with *San Francisco* - although the greatest example of what ska can be, it's the finest example of what MU330 can do, and that's great. The band rocks harder than I've heard them in *Stick It*. Excellent vocal arrangements throughout.

The Planet Smashers - Attack of the Planet Smashers (Underworld Records, 10738 Millen, Montreal H2C 2E6 Quebec, Canada) The 13-track vinyl edition of this band holds similar musical themes I've heard from them before - third ska with a vibrant two-tone spirit. *When Change* is the best song I've heard from them, Hostile easily is the most adventurous, led by a non-third-wave distorted rhythm guitar.

The Porkers - Hot Dog Daiquiri (Moon Ska) From its opening Gregorian chant, these Australian punk skankers hurtle through a wild ride that includes a few 50 G plummets through hardcore selections. It's crazy. You'll never believe the reports that this is dead if you listen to this thing. The sonic experience gives you a good hard experience of their performance during the southwest wing of the Warped Tour. *Asleep At The Wheel* gives every other ska-core band a run for their money, then slides into a rocksteady bridge. No weak links in this chain.

The Robustos - The New Authentic (Beatville Records) Here are 12 tracks with a heavy dose of rocksteady and roots. Jonathan Lloyd gifts us frequently with trombones, toasting, or both. But the magnificent strength of this recording lies in the vocal styling of Tonya Abernathy. Here is the soul singer you've been looking for these long years. She's here and I've told you where to find her. While the cover of *I Heard It Through The Grapevine* is certainly welcome and excellently rendered, I look forward to all those tracks Abernathy helped to write. Abernathy is flawless. There. I said it again.



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Reviews

Laurel Aitken/The Skatalites **Titans: Laurel Aitken & The Skatalites** (Moon Records)

While 10-plus tracks seem too few for this joyous, historical work – the strength of any two songs on this CD could fuel a half-dozen ordinary recordings. The musicians cover Motown's *Same Old Song*, as well as classics of Lord Tanamo such as *In The Mood For Love*. And finally, in presenting his composition for the First Lady of Ska, *Sugar Sugar*, sung by that lady, Doreen Shaffer – Aitkin and the Skatalites testify we can love ska's fervently we respect them. This is a musical exercise of spirit, not just a coldly intellectual historical work. Besides working with rich musical stuff, Moon has presented an engineering triumph in sound with this record, as well.

Blindspot - *Acceleration Zero* (Tomato Head Records, PO 61298, Sunnyvale CA 94088-1298) This is easily the most powerful ska-punk record since MU330's entry. And I'm not big on comparing one group to another, either. This is one big ska-punk band that can root their music in great song-writing, musicianship, and respect for ska's roots that is profound in a punk-oriented band. They pull it all off convincingly. They could sell a bridge or two. Rare is the hearing I've had where the horns meld so well the punk-oriented arrangements. These guys are heroes. Punk is not dead. Neither is ska. Check these 12 tracks.

Choking Victim - *No Gods/No Managers* (Hellcat Records) This ska-punk combo specializes in political and social critique set to, in their words, "that crack rock steady beat." In this 13-track set, they attack

television junkies, U.S. government corruption, war, greed – just about everyone and everything that makes your heart bleed, except maybe that automatic polling fax machine that beeps you awake in the night, looking for another fax machine. While their lyrics are literally poignant, what amazes me the most is how hard their music can get – even hardcore at times – while repeatedly demonstrating their respect for ska's origin. An excellent recording, including the political spoken word pieces by Michael Parenti, and with lots of disturbing graphics on the box and booklet.

Citizen Fish - *Active Ingredients* (Lookout Records, PO Box 11374, Berkeley CA 94712-2374)

Here are 13-tracks of skins-positive punk, and rocksteady from an England-based quartet. The music, at times, weaves with fine lyrics through complicated areas. The inspiration is as much from 1970s rock opera as terrace chants. There's a lot of critique of society and government. I am drawn to *Digging A Hole*, "Hatred of authority begins with doing what you're told to do/when advice replaces orders hatred slowly turns to caution..." and especially, *Sacred Cows*, "They told us beef was safe, then told us not to eat it. Got banned from exploration but not from the supermarket before someone else died!" Don't stop now, mates!

Common Rider - *Last Wave Rockers* (Panic Button, PO Box 148010, Chicago IL 60614-8010) Of course, ska fans versed in the music's history discuss rocksteady favorite Desmond Dekker all the time. But I can't remember hearing his name in a song until Jesse Michaels intones in *Classics of Love*, "Mr. Desmond Dekker has a crown made of gold...Ms. Ella Fitzgerald has no peer..." That's the first of 15 tracks by the power trio, lacing themes with edgy punk and rock riffs. While musicians guest on some tracks with saxophone, Hammond Organ and additional guitars and vocals, the music centers on the core trio. While the songs rock, most keep the ska, and at times rocksteady, in focus. Conscious Burning and Rough Redemption even work in some toasting.

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Secret Agent 8 (008 Records, 2821 12th Ave. N., Texas City TX 77590) Frantic third wave stuff throughout here and skillfully delivered. I saw these guys ■ the Warped Tour in Houston, in 95-degree heat, in full three-piece suit rudeboy regalia. Don't question their devotion. Their stuff on this 12-track entry runs from the fast stuff to two-tone styled devotionals, all with brass. Their ■ stab at rudeboy-style comes with *Rudi, What Happened To You*. There is no better, and has been no better Texas-based ska band than this one, live or Memorex. That's my personal, experienced guarantee.

Steady Earnest - *Dr. Earnest's Nerve Steadying Spirits* (Beatville Records) The 13-track Enhanced CD includes a video of Skin It Up, which punctuates the music with concert footage and scenes from Reefer Madness. The band's music aims for cleanly rendered third wave music with an edge coming from the guitars and vocal arrangements. Anchored by excellent horn players working with fine arrangements, the band's edgy influence is hinted by their cover of Donovan's Sunshine Superman. Other highlights are the religious Higher Power and spooky dub-styled Vampires. I'll keep listening.

Bunny Wailer Dubd'sco Volumes 1 & 2 (Ras Records, PO Box 42517, Washington DC 20015) I'm preaching to the choir, in praising dub music in general, or Bunny Wailer specifically. To give specifics, this record features dubs from the master's albums Blackheart Man and Bunny Wailer Sings the Wailers. There ■ 17 hypnotic tracks for a total of well over one hour of music. You probably don't need any more details, but if so e-mail me ■ ChuckX@Hotmail.com

Compilations

Reggae Roots - 1972-1995 (Island) This ■ is Volume 5 in this record label's 40th anniversary celebration. While reggae leads the title, there's lots of ska and dub included. My favorites among the 18 tracks include the hardest thing ever by Toots and the Maytals, Funky Kingston, and Aswad's Don't Turn Around. The latter is one you need to play for your teen ■ music fans. The No. 1 U.K. hit in 1988 ■ used by Sweden's

Ace of Base in ■ less-soulful setting - and many of their fans probably didn't know they were listening to Jamaican-derived music. Other ■ include Steel Pulse, Third World, Black Uhuru, Dillinger, Lee Perry, Jimmy Cliff and, of course, Bob Marley.

Zines

Free Refills No. 5 (\$1 to Mickey D., 20 Mountain Ridge Dr., Oxford NJ 07863) This lively, full-size newsprint zine has ■ sister Website ■ <http://members.xoom.com/FreeRefills/> if you want to check that out. Previous issues have generously covered the New Jersey ■ with interviews of Catch 22 and others, although the issues ■ centered on punk. This issue has a fine article on misconceptions in the skinhead scene, referring readers to S.T. Publishing in Scotland. This publisher has ■ wide variety of fiction and non-fiction literature about skins, mods and ska. The books are available in the United States from sources such as Moon Records and AK Press. A good read.

Rude International (\$12 subscription, \$3.50 single off the newstand, PO Box 391302, Cambridge MA 02139) Besides the fan-oriented stuff, such as coverage of a member of the Bosstones getting married, there's always one blockbuster article in this full-size, commercial magazine. This time it's two pages entitled *Skins ■ Film*. Fascinating stuff. Also, an excellent Q&A article on skins-oriented ska band The Skoidats with lots of large photographs. The most intriguing item there is the discussions of the band's life in Montana, before they moved to New Jersey. Bassist Chuck Fuller told the magazine, "Lots of rednecks. I ■ running all the time as soon as I rolled my pants up. People would yell, "Skinhead fag!" Life is better now for the band members.

Questions or comments? ■ mail me ■ ChuckX@Hotmail.Com if you like. You ■ mail me your comments, ■ and your vinyl, tapes and CDs for review as well, to Chuck X, ■ Westheimer Road, PMB 368, ■ TX 77077.

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LIVE SWING!

Dem Brooklyn Bums, @ The Leopard Lounge, Sayreville NJ, April 2, 1994 (CD release party)

It was about 9 months since Dem Brooklyn Bums tore up the stage at the Leopard Lounge (back then it was still Club Bene, before they renovated and made it into two clubs). Now, they were back with some fresh tunes from their new release *Step Up To The Plate*, and the band rocked the joint! As always, free dance lessons and DJ at the Leopard Lounge got the swing crowd juiced-up for Dem Bums' two swingin' sets. Opening with "Boozin' and a-Cruzin'" from their 1st release, they leaned on the crowd right from the start, who responded by staying on the dance floor all night long. The new tune, "Loose Cannon...Baby," is a swingin' number with the Bums' trademark horns, hot guitar licks, and a poundin' rhythm section. "Broccoli" Rob Cittadino welds his big, upright bass around like a tooth pick! (He's the Harpo Marx of swing - funny and a virtuoso). During the last song, the band paraded off the stage in a New Orleans-Mardi Gras style. They created a serpentine line around the dance floor. Then, Dem Bums formed a circle on the dance floor, and laid down on their backs (like the *Animals* from Animal House, where the "worm" during Shout), still improvising on "When the Saints Come Marching In" - it was a night for sure! Promoter Lenny Lounge (self-proclaimed "King Rat Bastard" of NJ's swing scene) threw another great swing show. (Contact the band at their web page, <http://www.DemBrooklynBums.com>)

THE CAMAROS - Leopard Lounge, Sayreville, NJ, April 16 1999
(with free dance lessons ■ DJ) *"They say the band was rockin,' goin' round and round. Yeah reelin' and rockin,' what ■ crazy sound. Well, they never stopped rockin,' ■ the moon went down!" -Chuck Berry "Round and Round"* Those lines sum up the entire evening. Between the Camaros' two supercharged sets, and the night being billed as a Pajama Party (promoter Lenny Lounge played the part of Hugh Hefner - ■ the Bunnies), the club ■ spinnin'! It started out calmly enough with the free dance lessons by Fawn and Gary (they're the Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire of swing). By the time the Camaros hit the stage, and led off with ■ upbeat "Junk Food," there ■ no turning back! Lead singers Jen Jones and Leeann Westover remind you of Betty & Veronica (from the Archie comics), only you can't tell which of their characters is good, and which ■ - they trade off. Leeann (brunette ■ glasses) had told me that this was their ■ show at the Leopard Lounge, and they ■ excited. The band's enthusiasm came through on both sets. At one point, Jen let ■ "men of the Camaros," as she calls them, take over. They performed ■ couple of top-notch numbers, led by Andy Riedelon (guitar ■ vocals) - these guys can cook! Back on the dance floor, ■ looked like it ■ ■ mix of vintage style nightclub and Victoria Secrets. Everyone ■ having ■ great time! The band played most of the tunes from their CD. *Evil*. On songs like "Too Damn Picky" and "Mean." Lee Ann and



Standing up or on the floor, Dem Brooklyn Burns
rocked the Leopard Lounge. Phot by Phil Rainone

Jen's voices melt together, and reach you on many levels - harmonies, lyrics, and especially the music! As the evening progressed, the pajama-clad patrons were really 'working their outfits.' At one point, Jen (blonde hair) went into the crowd to take a spin. When she got back up on stage,



The World Of Swing By Phil Rainone

she adjusted her stockings (nice gams!), ■■■ went back into the song, without missing ■ beat. On "Moanin', " they dove into ■ Ronettes-style swing number. It's a scorcher! ■■ the end of the night, The Camaros left the crowd wanting more. (Their PJs were sweat-soaked, but they ■■■■ all smiling!)

GOTHAM CITY SWING - Leopard Lounge, Sayreville, NJ - April 7, 1999 Gotham City Swing was recently tapped to open for Royal Crown Review here on St. Patrick's Day (great show)! Now they [redacted] back and able to stretch out and play for 2 sets. Opening with their upbeat trademark tune, "Gotham City Swing," they had the crowd out on the dance floor 'shakin' ■ tail-feather! The band's music is a mix of mid-tempo swing and jump blues, with [redacted] New Orleans style. They do a swingin' cover of Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" too. The crowd [redacted] able to keep up with the changes in tempo, thanks to Larissa, who gave the free dance lessons. There were ■ lot of [redacted] faces and ■ few people with "two ■ feet" - like me - but they caught on quickly. (Hey this ain't no country line dancing - freestyle was fine too!) Lead singer Mike "C-Note" Whittes bounced around the stage like ■ super ball in ■ confined space - lots of energy. The whole band (8 pieces) kept the covers and originals fresh and upbeat. Opening their second [redacted] with "Swingin' Sue" (from their new disc, *Off the Hook*) they brought the crowd back on the dance floor again. (The DJ kept 'em boppin on their break). Tunes like "Lindy Mindy," "Dwee Bop," and "Hot 'N' Blue," kept the joint rockin! For the closer, "Pop Tart Bop," the band threw Pop Tarts out to the crowd and it was fun and swinging, just like the rest of their show

SWING PLATTERS

THE ERIC EKSTRAND ENSEMBLE - *Spiked Heel Stomp* (PO Box 11033 Glendale, CA 91266) Here's a 15-piece swing band (don't compare them to the Brian Setzer Orch.) lead by composer, arranger, pianist, and vocalist Eric Ekstrand. The band members are all veterans of numerous, high-profile bands. With that said, you'd assume they're some high and mighty uptown snobs - just the opposite! The opening numbers, "Murder ■ the Cotton Club" and "Oh Babe," are foot-stomping, high-energy tunes. ("Murder" is punctuated by some fiery drum rolls). Ekstrand's voice is full of energy, style, and attitude. "Spike Heel Stomp," has a boogie-woogie, piano-pumping beat that leads right into the classic "Rocket 88." - jumpin' tunes! "Bright Red Lipstick" ■ catchy, with spicy lyrics like, "She wears bright red lipstick, and she gets it all over me." This is the type of music that helped give birth to early rock ■ roll! As Eric would say, "If it ain't got that swing, it ain't a spiked heel stomping thing."

GOTHAM CITY SWING - Off Hook (PO Box 1324 Point Pleasant Beach, NJ 08742) Finally, a full CD from Gotham City Swing! (They only had a demo tape previously) Songs like "Lindy Mindy" and "Swingin' Sue," which are already staples of their live show, sound clean, fun and upbeat!

The latter song ■ ■ rave up about meeting ■ girl, while swingin' at the Jersey shore. (A nice twist on Springsteen's odes to the area) The disc was recorded live at Trax East in South River, NJ-it's a good reflection of their live show. The horns, (Dave "Moneyclip" Michalewski/trumpet, "Jumpin" Jeff Greene/tenor ■■, and Brian "The Axeman" Pizza/trombone) give ■■ music a kick in the pants-they wail! On "Gotham City Swing," the band melts together-hot rhythm section! ■■ these guys live, but until then, get this disc-it has 'bop 'til you drop' written all over it!

THE ATOMIC FIREBALLS - *Torch This* ■■■ (Lava/Atlantic) *Torch This Place* opens with "Man with the Hex." It's ■ a drum pounding, swing/jump blues tune, that turns into a call -and- -response, gospel -style rave up! John Bunkley belts out some of the rawest vocals since the heyday of Stax/Volt Records (Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, etc.) "Mata Hari," about the infamous female German spy, tells a provocative tale of ■■ & intrigue. "Swing Sweet Pussycat," A rollicking tune (my choice for single on the year), will be featured in a new movie with ■■ all-swing ■■■ from Warner Bros. It sounds like the band had a great time making this disc. Their live show must be like an all-night party!

BIG RUDE JAKE (Roadrunner) This platter ■ hot! Our Canadian cousin Big Rude Jake (he's ■ very cool cat - caught him and his band at Club Bene, at a Swing Fest, in late '98), mixes swing, ragtime, jump blues, and some rockabilly into some jumpin' tunes. Jake's strong vocals and the bands flexibility make a sizzling combination. "Mercy for the Monkey Man" and "East Side Jive" are two of those "get-on-the-dance-floor" toppers! "Queer for Cat" is ■ tune about a guy who loses his gal to another dame. The lyrics are cool, funny, and full of irony! The song reminds me of the Reel Big Fish tune, "She has a Girlfriend Now." Big Rude Jake has a swingin' disc, and ■ hoppin' live show, see 'em soon!

THE CAMAROS - *Evil* (Stupid Records) What will first attract you to The Camaros music is the "girl group" sound of Jen Jones & Lee Ann Westover. Their harmonies melt together on the cover songs as well as the originals (which are outright, catchy swing tunes.) Then, once you ■ back and really listen, you'll hear the steady, grooving swing of the rest of the band. Together, they give the songs ■ hard-swing dance rhythm. "Moanin'" starts off with a 50's doo-wop sound, like the Diamond's "Little

Darlin,' ■■ after ■ false ending, turns into a swingin' ska tune. On "I Wanna be Famous," one line goes, "I ■■■ be famous, more than just any old girl." With the exuberant & high quality musicians this band has, they will be soon!

DR. ZOOT - *Ghost of Swing* (81 Lilmont, Pgh., Pa. 15218) ■■ having seen the band yet (hopefully soon), their CD conjures up terrific images of what their live show must be like! Upbeat and full of life, the 11 tunes here (including 8 strong originals) range from slow cheek-to-cheek dance music ("Moonlight Lemonade"), to swingin' show-stoppers like "Cat in the Hat," and "Jump, Jive, & Shake" (■■ latter is featured ■■ ■■ *Swing This, Baby!* 2 compilation on Slimstyle). There's also Dixieland Swing ("Closer to the Bone"). "Guido the Mosquito" is a fun, tongue-in-cheek poke ■ ■■ "suave guys with the gold chains." (Reminds ■■ of the boys from NY, Dem Brooklyn Burns - another cool swing band!) All total, a good disc. See 'em live when they're around your way, these cats swing!

INDIGO SWING - *Red Light* (Timebomb Recordings) The 3rd release from Indigo Swing (2nd for Timebomb), shows how deep the swing scene is getting! The band continues their tradition of solid, sweet swing (featuring Johnny Boyd's vocals) on tunes like "Red Light" and "The Best You Can." They play the type of music that helped lay the foundation for early rock ■ roll. There's boogie woogie ("Hot Pot Boogie"), jump blues ("Big Hair Mama"), and the rock ■ roll swing of "Pop's At The Hop." Indigo Swing's enthusiasm over the years has not diminished. Josh Workman's guitar licks, along with the swank horn and rhythm section, sneak up on you throughout the songs. Before you know it, you're out on the dance floor with your date, workin' up ■ sweat! This platter should be in jukeboxes ■■■ the country, and spinning on your disc player.

JUMP WITH JOEY - *Swingin' Ska Goes South of ■■ Border* (Will Records) Jump with Joey swing their ska old-school style on their new disc. (The hot ska music they created previously for Rykodisc has been excellent!) Besides ska, they include Swing, Latin, Mambo, and "Ska Cha Cha," as they call it. "TV Tray", "Ska Train", "Fun ■ King King", all have ■ sizzling, upbeat style. This is one of the few bands around that can take a style of music (in ■■ case ska), and turn ■ inside out, or go traditional, and still come out with something unique and fun!

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SCOTTY MOORE - *The Guitar that Changed the World* (Razor and Tie) From the beginning, Sam Phillips' Sun Studio's, Scotty Moore was the guitarist instrumental in helping to create Elvis' distinctive sound. Razor and Tie has reissued Scotty's 1964 updated instrumental interpretations of Elvis' hits. Among others, the CD features D.J. Fontana, (drums), who played with Scotty on the originals, along with the heavenly voices of the Jordannaires (Elvis' soulful back up singers). On songs like "Loving You", "Money Honey", "Heartbreak Hotel", "Mystery Train" and "Mean Woman Blues", Scotty's classic sound, tastefully licks and his use of space (silence) are extraordinary! On the 2 latter songs he gives us a full dose of his original style of rockabilly riffs. It's a gas!

THE ORIGINAL SWINGERS (swingerz@theglobe.com) The opening song "Daddy Tonight," swings with a fluid, rockabilly beat. From there the music turns towards rock, funk, and blues. "Remember" (about past friendships) has a funky, driving beat, that's evident in most of the songs. Based in New Brunswick, they add more diversity to the scene that's already been established there over the past few years.

SET 'EM UP JOE (Daddy-O/Royalty Records) Set 'Em Up Joe are the Jukes (Southside Johnny & the Jukes) of swing! They've got the bounce, swagger and the attitude. Like the Jukes, they took a genre (R&B & Jump Blues) and added their own interpretation. Songs like "Zoot Suit," "I Wanna Have Fun" and "Gasoline" are fun, danceable tunes. On the latter song, Greg Mangus (vocals) spits out lines like "You're my gasoline, you keep me runnin' hot, you're my gasoline, sweet baby, you're all I got" - pure rock & roll! Like Dem Brooklyn Bums, they pay tribute to New York on tunes like "Brooklyn Hearted" and "Hit Me with a Hot Dog" - about traveling the world and what they miss most. On "Brooklyn Hearted", Mangus shares the mike with Krisa Washburne. The song comes out swank & sultry. These guys got it made in the shade!

WALLY'S SWING WORLD - *Full Swing Ahead* (On Tap Management, PO Box 8323 Santa Cruz, CA 95060) Wally's Swing World have been

playing on the swing since '92, they're no Johnny-come-latelys. The band plays all the tunes in the lounge singer/crooner vein. Interestingly, they make over some of the songs into their style ("There's a Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder," "Saturday Night is the Loneliest Night"), which is not an easy task! They cover the "Rat Pack" (Sinatra, Martin & Davis) along with big band numbers (Basie, Goodman, etc.). Wally's Swing World doesn't break any new ground but they are good at what they do - which is playing some solid music and keeping the scene alive. They update "American Bandstand" with some horns and some fresh guitar licks!

FRIDAY NITE RUMBLE Vol.3 (Run Wild, P. O. Box 123, Lebanon, NJ 08833) Run Wild's third volume of high-octane rockabilly, features a worldwide assortment of bands. Jersey's Hellcats do an impressive, rockin' "Baby You Know (I Love You)." Hopefully they'll have a full C.D. out some time soon! The Howlin' Moondoggies ("Alright, Alright") and Hank's Jalopy Demons ("Gasoline Baby") hail from Australia. The latter is an original scorcher that opens this platter. Between it and the closer "On the Road Again" (a boogie-woogie foot stomper) by Wild Bob Burgas, the music doesn't let up. It's all a joyous comp of rockabilly music! Like Vols. 1 & 2 (and their Blasters Tribute,) Run Wild has given us rockabilly's past, present and future in a single compilation - great music!

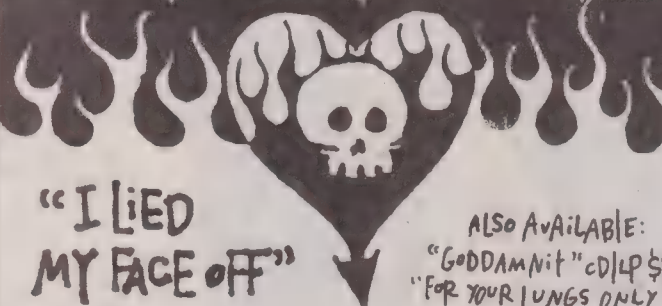
SWING SUCKS (Liberation Records, PO Box 17746, Anaheim, CA 92817) Here's a comp of new and current bands that'll knock your socks off! Royal Crown Revue conjure up hilarious images of stories like "The Man on the Flying Trapeze" on "The Rise & Fall of The Great Mondello." Steve Lucky & the Rhumba Bums check in with their already-classic "Rumpus Room Honey Moon." A cool surprise is Big Sandy (a rockabilly legend) covering The Blasters' "Hey Girl, Hey Boy." It's a swingin' call-and-response tune! Then there's the Camaros contribution, "Too Damn Picky," from their hot platter, *Evil*. The list of hoppin' bands just keeps getting longer - Swingerhead, Lee Press-on & the Nails, Dem Brooklyn Bums (they're the Lenny Bruce Springsteen of swing, according to their manager, Luigi), to name a few. The closer, "New Orleans" (originally done by Gary US Bonds, one of Bruce Springsteen's heroes) by The Big Six leaves you with a dance floor stomper! Yeah, *Swing Sucks*, big time!

SWING THIS, BABY - Vol. 2 (Slimstyle/Beyond) They're back! Another solid platter from Slimstyle. Like Vol. 1, this disc showcases 15 new bands playing some of the hottest swing around. Crescent City Maulers lead off with "Jump, Jive, & Wail." Their version is smooth, and in the groove. What sets Vol. 2 apart from the original is the different branches and offshoots of modern swing (ska, blues, rockabilly, & Latin). Although more diverse, the bands stay true to the genre. The Camaros (who sound like a revved up version of The Andrews Sisters, only a bit sultry and streetwise), really shine on "All I Really Want." The Jet Set Six chime in with their swank tune "Perpetual Bachelor." It's a martini-sippin' romp about a guy who loves the single life. Cigar Store Indians give us "Tossin' N Turnin'," a hot swing number that gives you a taste of their CD. All total, there's too much emotion and energy here for the kittens (or any music fan) to ignore!

ULTRA LOUNGE - Part. 2 (Capitol) This 25 track sampler (23 listed) ranges from TV show themes to exotica, swing and some wacky stuff! Nelson Riddle covers "My Three Sons" in an upbeat lounge style. Other lounge stylings include Billy Ray's "The Look of Love," and "Happy Together" by Mel Torme - very swank! Gloria Wood turns in a swinging, hilarious "Oh Honey" (Oh honey... Please don't...please don't stop...) - you get the picture, it's devilish! Miss Peggy Lee evokes a classic "The Boy from Ipanema," as does Julie London (who'd have thought!) on "Come On-a My House." Two of the swaggiest romps are "My Baby Just Cares for Me" by June Hutton and "I Dig Chicks" by Jonah Jones. Of course they included a stopper - "Just a Gigolo" & I ain't Got Nobody," by Louis Prima. The last 2 tracks (24 & 25) are so serious that they're hilarious! "Champagne Darling" is a suave and sophisticated gent trying to seduce his amore. "Bongo Lessons" is just that. Instructions on playing the bongos professionally in one easy lesson! It's a scream!

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Our resident Anglophile Tris McCall continues to cast a jaundiced eye and a keen Yankee ear on the latest offerings from across the pond...

kula shaker — *peasants, pigs & astronauts* (creation/columbia) this isn't anywhere near as good as you've probably heard it is — and if you dug it, and you haven't become completely sick of late sixties-early seventies revival acts, you probably owe it to yourself to ignore the dreadful reviews and check this joint out. no longer fascinated with george harrison, crispan mills has welded himself on to an altogether weirder object of retro obsession: deep purple. trouble is, mills is still very much the slick, ornate guitar-effect junkie who brought you "tattva", and his attempts to toughen up his stance are about as successful as pm dawn's; much of this record sound like a strange hybrid of hawkwind and the *rent* soundtrack. but, hey, in a year when the new backstreet boys single features a harmony break that wouldn't sound out of place on *close to the edge*, kula shaker probably deserves a little slack for theatrical prog-rock indulgence — and after the initial time-warp shock wears off, "mystical machinegun" and "s.o.s." just feel like great sing-along summer songs. less successful are the new indian chants ("radhe radhe", "namani nanda"), which seem out of place in this harder-rocking context, and never approach the psychedelic, mind-blowing heights of "govinda". mills' appropriation of eastern musical elements never seemed exactly natural, and in the wake of cornershop, you might now want to call him a kind of an ethnoprator, no matter how sincere his hare krishna beliefs might be. ☆☆☆

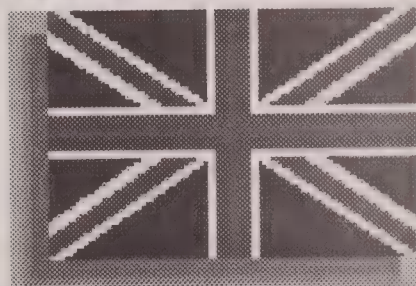
talvin singh — *ok* (island) a far more successful attempt at integrating indian and eastern traditional music within the framework of western pop musical forms, singh's *ok* regularly achieves a balance and synthesis that makes both cornershop and crispan mills look like crude collage artists in comparison. a classically-trained tabla player and self-confessed club kid; singh's remarkable beat programming seamlessly synchronizes indian percussion with electronic drums, and the results are often breathtakingly beautiful. but i am an old philistine who throws stones at abstract art, and to me, singh's approach, and technical proficiency, constructs soundscapes that feel altogether too refined — better suited for automobile commercials that dance floors. if talvin singh's instrument — the tabla-tronic, a tabla that triggers effects and electronic drums when played — functions as a metaphor for cultural interaction, it seems strange to me that singh would choose not to represent any interference, or friction. that's probably not his project, and that's certainly okay; i'm sure that a musician of his intelligence and sophistication would have a perfectly valid, theorized reason for placing eastern musical signifiers in such perfect, almost interchangeable harmony with western ones. nevertheless, it's instances like this when a good, visionary musical composition could benefit from the kind of clarification, coherence and direction that only words can provide. that's why god invented lyrics, and i do wish that more of the new music artists could remember that, and find a place for a genuinely consistent lyrical approach in their body of work. ☆☆☆

shantel — *higher than the funk* (k7/essay) all grumpy and gripes aside, talvin singh is a master of what he does; he's a brilliant producer and a champion fabricator of soundscapes — he aims for a kind of pristine perfection, and he's able to attain that. trip-hop auteur stefan hantel, or shantel, has similar aspirations, but only a fraction of the vision. but it's the vision which distinguishes one electronica record from another, after all; computer technology being what it is, any anal-retentive beat fascist can program their album to be perfectly tight, rhythmically precise, and conforming to mind-warping time. somebody needs to tell these guys that in order to make a good album, a tiny bit of recklessness is necessary — and a few humanizing mistakes wouldn't hurt, either. vocalist liane sommers, has a kind of sleepy charm to her delivery, but compared to the much-maligned ruth-ann of olive — another singer engaged in the onerous process of trying to sound vaguely soulful or approachable amidst synthetic fireworks — she hasn't enough character to adequately distinguish the tracks she highlights. the commercial hook here is a "cover", or electronica reimagining of "wouldn't it be lovely" from *my fair lady*, but since most music artists are congenitally incapable of changing chords, the melody is re-cast as a bluesy drone. you don't have to be a beatles-obsessed melodic fetishist to realize that what's here substantially outweighs what's gained. ☆☆

kid silver — *dead city sunbeams* (jetset) cultural dilettantes, including many who write for hip city newspapers, want to imagine that the coming

of figures like hantel and singh, coupled with the rise of limitless computer technology and sampladelia, renders standard rock experimentation quaint and anachronistic. in 1999, poppy guitar guys are supposed to put away their phasers, and psychedelic ambitions, and go off to a mountain somewhere and make wilco records. but if that were really the case, music like *dead city sunbeams* wouldn't even get recorded, let alone released. kid silver formed after the shakeout of roller-skate skinny, and like that act, they offer tightly-constructed, tripped out pop ruminations that wouldn't sound out of place on a robyn hitchcock solo joint (both silver's "67 cities of light" and "devils" are extremely reminiscent of "grooving on an inner plane", and i give them as quite a compliment). principal songwriter and philosophical generalist ken griffin desperately needs to develop his lyrical sensibility past pleas for transcendence and self-expression, but he frequently manages a genuinely memorable, bright line or two per track. a striking vocal resemblance — particularly in his low register — to bono doesn't help much, but griffin does manage to invest most of these tracks with distinctive character. kid silver wins points for some daring and beautiful synth programming, and a commitment to a grand, unsettling sound that's orchestral in its implications, but which

BRITISH



BEAT by tris mccall

leaves plenty of room for the listener. and when this project coheres, it does on "breadcrumbs" and the wonderful "chasing daylight", the musical results prove simultaneously eerie and exhilarating. ☆☆☆

xtc — *apple venus* (vvt) now, in andy partridge, we have a guy who's made a career out of handling acoustic guitars, and acoustic instruments, in the most thuggish, threatening manner possible, and no matter how strenuously he has attempted to ape the lovely textures of *sgt. pepper*, the herky-jerky maniac who brought you "rocket from a bottle" won't still. that's a good thing, by the way, and it's also helps salvage *apple venus* — an album which could easily have been a precious, pastoral mess, but is instead remarkably obnoxious and edgy for a joint recorded by a bunch of older dudes with stringed instrument fetishes. partridge, one to settle for c major when c sus maj7+ a flat would do, brings his highly characteristic harmonic sensibility to this batch of chamber pop songs, but what makes *apple venus* more memorable than 1992's *nonsuch* (gosh, was it really that long ago?) is the antsiness of these performances: horny, dirty old flasher on "i'd like that", vaguely threatening on "easter theatre", wonderfully repugnant on "your dictionary". he'll probably never lose his penchant for delivering his more mundane or awkward phrases like he expects to win pulitzers with them, but he's a didactic cool, an acquired taste, and if you don't love him a little by now, well, you probably haven't been paying too much attention to pop music during the past twenty years. accomplished bassist colin moulding contributes his usual two clunkers, including the unspeakably horrid "frivolous tonight". but, boy, is he great on them unexpected vocal harmonies, all of them pure xtc. ☆☆☆

whistler — *whistler* (willja) partridge, his most vitriolic, is a sentimentalist; an overgrown, hyperactive child expressing friendship and enmity, gain and loss, with equal impatience and urgency. ian dench

plays his acoustic guitar with ■ commensurate brutality, yet while partridge generates warmth, dench radiates distance, antipathy, and even horror. the acoustic guitar is unparalleled ■ ■ transmitter of *personality*: ■ two accomplished instrumentalists sound remotely alike, and dench has perfected a malevolent, sardonic tone. in vocalist kerry shaw, he's found ■ perfect collaborator — ■ vocal dead ringer for sarah blackwood, substituting a pristine, fine-line hostility for reserve and longing. shaw sings lyrics of menace and hatred in her prettiest voice, and the spare accompaniment (rarely much ■ ■ ■ than guitar, viola, and drums) supports her with a strange, hypnotic iciness. there's something almost inhuman about ■ ■ ■ — shaw's ability ■ deliver some of the most scathing put-down and break-up songs in recent memory in no way precludes her character from sympathy, but her uncanny reserve and perpetual distance dares the listener to succumb to identification with, or desire for, her. "i always thought i'd like ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ tears from you", she offers, with gorgeous malice, to an ex-lover, "that's one last pleasure that i've been denied". ■ thousand times more dangerous than marilyn manson, badder than dmx, and one of ■ year's most remarkable records. ■ is in no way instructive or pertinent to point out to you that ian dench, in what seems like a genuine past life, wrote "unbelievable" and "lies" for emf, but ten years from now, when britney spears comes out with a record of devastating ■ ■ ■ satire, remember that it's never wise to count out pop ■ ■ ■ — eventually, when they get to where they're going, they'll shout you out. ☆☆☆

■ box recorder — *england made me* (jetset) the auteurs, ■ ■ ■ other hand, were never pop stars to begin with, and luke haines, despite ■ ■ ■ he'd tell you, ■ ■ ■ a big part of ■ ■ ■ problem: he thought his lyrical observations were witty, trenchant, and quotable, when he was actually sloganeering in ■ manner best fit for refrigerator magnets. now the auteurs are history, but haines can't get away from his own worst tendencies; "child psychology", the effective centerpiece of *england made me*, features this lead balloon of a chorus: "life is unfair/kill yourself or get over it". while somewhat ■ ■ ■ singable than "my grandparents went to boca raton and all i got was this stupid t-shirt", haines' dunderheaded

couplet (repeated over and over, mind you, by vocalist sarah nixey, in the event you don't grasp its world-defining wisdom the ■ ■ ■ ten times you hear it). is neither smarter nor less obvious. there *are* good songs, good moments, and even flashes of intelligence on *england made* ■ ■ ■ — nixey's deadpan performance on "kidnapping an heiress" ■ a standout, and the album's obsession with reproduction and abduction of children becomes circular and creepy after the second listen — but haines' willingness to ■ ■ ■ for half-baked witticisms eventually swamps the project. an arch and all-too-predictable cover of "seasons in the sun" ponderously closes ■ ■ ■ record; ■ you've got one of those cd players that allow you to skip tracks, i strongly urge you to spare yourself. ☆☆

travis cut — *seventh inning stretch* (karma) enjoyable, aggressive london punks, commendable for their appreciation of the best things in american culture: baseball, and loud rock music. no, seriously, this is ■ fine, if rather unremarkable set of immediate, personal punk rock songs. travis cut compensates for their lack of originality by generating a surplus of raw energy (they even yell "oi oi oi"), and that's an exchange that more groups should be willing to make. the lead vocalist, identified only ■ chris, has ■ ■ ■ to write some amazingly forthright and flatfooted lyrics, including the self-explanatory "another dumb punk rock song about a girl". here's ■ ■ ■ limitation inherent in this approach: when songs are ■ ■ ■ transparently accessible, they can ■ ■ ■ synthesized and understood too quickly — ■ ■ ■ absence of sonic or lyrical ambiguity ■ ■ ■ nuance obviates the need to spin a joint like *seventh inning stretch* more than ■ handful of times. travis cut takes chuck d's "don't rhyme for ■ ■ ■ sake of riddlin" axiom to ■ logical extreme — ■ song ■ ■ ■ "my idea of fun" is ■ three-minute blast of straightforward vitriol, perfectly digestible and understandable upon first listen. "not trying to ■ ■ ■ you/it's just i fucking hate you" — that's a great punchline, but ultimately, it's little more than that. i appreciate travis cut's commitment to clarity and intelligibility, but when subsequent listens fail to add anything to the experience of ■ piece of pop music, it's probably imperative for the group's long-term prospects to develop some additional dimensions. ☆☆☆



FAT WRECK CHORDS P.O. BOX 103466 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94110




blur – 13 (epic) god, what a mess. here we have sir damon albam telling the british press that he doesn't think of himself as a songwriter anymore; rather, he's more of a *composer*. mate graham coxon, always the first in line to knock anything with a crowd-pleasing chorus, claims that once you've left pop behind, it's next to impossible to go back. meanwhile, back on planet earth, those of us who were absent from class on the day when blur mastered pop songwriting left to struggle though 13, one of the most overdone and taxing albums in recent memory, and almost without question their poorest joint. with the help of william orbit (last seen recycling big audio dynamite riffs for madonna), blur has manufactured a two-dimensional food-processor wall of sound that they don't present to the listener much as they inflict, rendering "bugman" positively painful and "swamp song" laughably unlistenable. only one song here – the stomper "trimm trabb" – is good enough to stand with blur's best originals, and while tantalizing snatches of quality material occasionally flash through the din, they're inevitably submerged. buried beneath the monotony and sonic overkill is albam's most personal set of lyrics, but at closer inspection, it turns out to be a gruesome tease too – albam is simply not the sort of guy you'd ever want to catch in a confessional mode. he's built his reputation on aristocratic arrogance and occasional ballistic moralizing – he's always been the ace, the scornful cultural critic, and above all, the *topman*, "shooting guns on the high ground of love", right? for him to shift gears this late in his career and go trolling for sympathy... well, that might even be funny if he wasn't so inept at it: "i lost my girl like the rolling stones" is about the best he can manage. like most of us, blur seems to have been moved by spiritualized's magnificent *ladies and gentlemen we are floating in space* (and yes, jason pierce farns, that is the london community gospel choir you hear on the first track of 13) but they've taken all the wrong lessons from it – so instead of heartbreaking sentiment followed by even more gutwrenching instrumental sections, 13 leads with the dissonance and noise, and leaves it up to you to ferret out the meaning. long-time fans (like me) will do the necessary work, of course, but the time out, the meager rewards hardly justify the effort. ★★

prolapse – *ghosts of dead airplanes* (jetset) here's a group which has made a considerable stir on both sides of the atlantic, and if you haven't heard them yet, chances are you'll be pretty familiar with their music before the year is out. *ghosts of dead airplanes* lacks some of the brutal firepower of *the italian flag*, its immediate predecessor, but it has the sound and suppleness of a record which is destined to make its presence felt. prolapse's most apparent influence is sonic youth, and parts of *ghosts of dead airplanes* (and, to be fair, most of *the italian flag*) bears a considerable sonic resemblance to the best cuts on *evol*. prolapse's explorers seem to be also a good point of comparison – prolapse boasts a dynamite dub rhythm section, and at least on this joint, the bass guitar is mixed for maximum precision and clarity, and it drives the songs with power and steady articulation. twin singers linda steelyard and mick derrick repeat their occasionally frightening act of vocal symbiosis, yet it's derrick who really steals this album – first on the menacing "cylinders v 12 beats cylinders 8" with an unintelligible (yet oddly fascinating) tag line, and then again on the album's climax, the straightforward rocker "government of spain". here, while steelyard coolly intones over an electric groove, derrick unleashes every ounce of outrage and desperation from his cracking voice. a group to watch, without a doubt. ★★


mansun – *six* (epic) judged objectively by impartial american ears, *six* feels moderately ambitious, but changing tempos, adding sound effects, and quoting liberally from tchaikovsky does not make a prog-rock epic; as a matter of fact, these days, innovations like this are customary, as is a certain ironic pretentiousness. draper's pomposity with panache and mannish charm, but he did simon le bon, and *six*, steeped in eighties musical tropes, sounds to me like the album duran duran should have released in the place of *arena* and *the ragged tiger*. mansun deserves props for releasing the difficult "being a girl" as the first single, and for maintaining a certain iconoclastic yet high-minded and straight-faced lyrical tone ("i'm emotionally raped by jesus/but i'm still here" goes a pretty representative verse), but when draper cuts in with his showy falsetto, the result is pure boy band cotton candy. ★★

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Almost too soon after the last issue of *Jersey Beat* came out, I got an e-mail from a guy who listed out about a hundred potential new names for this column. Some of them were fuckin' hysterical. Unfortunately, I lost his note and I don't remember any of the good names, so we're gonna have to go with the old name for another issue. I'm still taking suggestions, though, and if the guy who sent the original e-mail reads this column, please re-send me the list. The address is dromedary@mindspring.com. Anyone else who wants to use that address, I'm free. Just don't send me nastygrams because I slagged your band in print – if I slag your band, it's because you suck, and I won't respond.

I've found it difficult to concentrate on much of anything for the last three months. While we bomb the Yugoslavians back into the second dimension, high-school kids in our own country have begun shooting each other, the alarming rate, and police officers are abusing the public trust and committing crimes right here in my home state. The Y2K is on the way, India and Pakistan battle daily over Kashmir, and tensions are high in the Korean Peninsula. U.S. relations with Russia and China are at a low point, my stock in Dell Computer has dropped by \$10 a share in the last three months. I'm standing on the precipice of my 30th birthday and I'm having a hard time figuring out exactly what's going on with my world.

There's been a lot of speculation on where to place blame for the Colorado Georgia school shootings. The media? Poor parenting? Marilyn Manson? Howard Stern? During an exceptionally long and boring ride recently, I turned on Rush Limbaugh (which I do not do routinely, mind you) to hear his listeners blaming everything from the film *Heathers* to the manufacturers of black clothing. And the fat guy himself sarcastically suggested that Hollywood the same way as Big Tobacco, since Hollywood is obviously responsible for killing people.

A hippie friend of mine who lives near Littleton has this theory: "We blame the gun laws, the violent movies, video games, latch-key households, but the bottom line is children have to be taught to hate. We are not born that way. Children need to grow up believing in the sanctity of all life." And I think that's about the best explanation I've heard for all the maladies we're currently facing.

So, with the spirit of this in mind, I will now spend a few pages tearing apart shitty records.

When I put on GABE CAHILL's new CD *Space Junk* (Ant Hill Recording, PO Box 311, Boys Town, NE 68010) on, my wife started howling like a dog. The opening track, "Light Bright", is a 1970s glam-sounding thing with layers of acoustic guitars providing the rhythm while fuzzy electric guitars play overdubbed solo lines. But the vocals are so out of key that it's nearly impossible to listen to – "Light Bright" has harmonies that are sung so fuckin' off-key that it hurts my ears, it hurts my ears, make it stop! I listened to a few more tracks to see if it was just a glam thing, and I'm pretty convinced it is, since the musicianship is fairly good, but the vocals just don't work. Sing on key, Gabe, or get someone else to do it.

Another horseshit record is the new one from RON SEXSMITH, *Where's the Love* (Interscope, a major label with lots of money). Just don't buy any of this pretentious, lite-rock crap that poses as "singer-songwriter" music if you're okay. Seems like the majors are into this sort of thing lately, and while sometimes they'll catch lightning in a bottle by discovering someone like Duncan Sheik, most of the time you get this sort of regurgitated contemporary phlegm. This is Olivia Newton-John for the 1990s, and I'm turning 30 soon and afraid someone will hear this CD in my den and put me out of home.

And when I listened to JULIE ADAMS & THE RHINO BOYS' new CD *I Don't Mind Walking* (Gadfly, PO Box 5231, Burlington, VT 05402), I kept thinking of the NASCAR race I'm going to in a few weeks. "I'm On Wheels" is a slice of trailer Americana, a "keep on truckin'" country-folk "I'm gonna pull myself together and reach for the stars" kind of tune that recalls old, 1970s "Smokey and the Bandit" ripoff films. Vocalist Julie Adams has a pretty-yet-plain sort of voice, but she's backed by what sound like very talented but emotionless session musicians. The music is fine in terms of composition and arrangement, but it seems bland. To me, the beauty of roots-based American music is its honesty and emotion;

something that a gruff-voiced country guy sobbing into his beer is infinitely more appealing than this. "Lucky One", an upbeat sounding, yet emotionless pop song with vocal harmonies recalling that old song "Pilot of the Airwaves" (who sang that song?) is, lyrically, the type of country cliché about the poor, beaten-down woman waiting for her luck to turn. This type of song makes me sick, because it makes me envision every southern housewife in Tennessee, sitting teary-eyed in the kitchen, adopting this song as their personal anthem – if waiting around for a lucky break would somehow actually result in it. Like "I Will Survive" for hillbillies.

Every time I listen to a bland band like Julie Adams & The Rhino Boys, I long for someone with eclectic musical tastes and a little soul to flush the shitty taste out of my mouth, and this time I got one. MIKE "SPORT" MURPHY writes lazy, swinging epics that were inspired by the likes of Hoagy Carmichael, Brian Wilson, Nick Cave and others. He's got Alex Chilton's voice and writes complex music that is, refreshingly, exactly as

by
Al
Crisafulli



The Column Formerly Known As The Quiet Corner

eclectic as I described in the bio that came with his CD Willoughby (Kill Rock Stars, 120 North East State Avenue #418, Olympia, Washington 98501). "Carry Me To The Piano" is a sad, slow piece that typifies this record; overflowing with the most melodic chord progressions played by uncommon instruments like mandolin and piano innards. In fact, looking down the list of instruments played on this record reads like a "what's what" of weirdness – hand drums, ukelele, toy piano, jew's harp, autoharp. Tastefully underplayed piano mixes with acoustic guitar, accented by these unconventional instruments, recalling a variety of musics along the way. "The Moon Stares Down" is a sing-songy, piano-driven nursery rhyme that recalls that type of Beatles song for which they're never properly recognized (like "Fixing a Hole" and "When I'm Sixty-Four"). "Sport" is a lounge singer in the mountains of West Virginia, which I mean as a compliment. "Potrzebie" is an arena rock guitar-solo recorded to sound like a 1970s AM-radio rock song, punctuated by spoken words of authors and poets – "Edgar Allen Poe!" "Henry David Thoreau!" "Mark Twain!" "Emily

DOUG HOEKSTRA wins me over immediately on his **CD Believe** (One Man Whining, 2032 North Racine, Chicago, IL 60614) "Sam Cooke Sang the Gospel", a mellow, groovy acoustic guitar-and-organ driven song about Sam Cooke and the effect he had on people whom he sang. Hoekstra half-sings, half-speaks his lyrics in a whispery, rhythmic sort of way, backed by minimal instruments. Its almost creepy, actually, since the production is outstanding, this whispery voice echoes throughout the room, filling every corner with lyrics like "There's a sadness in my heart and it makes me ache". Unfortunately, by the fifth or sixth track, the whispery, spoken-sung vocals **start** to sound whiny, and begin to grate on your nerves, like Morrissey whispering so he doesn't wake up a sleeping Nick Cave. The music stays largely the same from song to song, and the listener gets bored. Listening to this record is kind of like listening to comedian Steven Wright, and hoping he'll SCREAM something, just to break up the monotony - but unfortunately, Doug Hoekstra **never** screams.

M5's **Greatest Hits** (Modmusic, PO Box 3310, Long Island City, NY 11103) confused me. The opening track, "Desire", is a straightforward, well-performed three-chord "adult alternative" song that sounds so much like Natalie Merchant I **was** looking for her name in the liner notes. It should be noted here that I hate Natalie Merchant. Singer/guitarist Marilyn D'Amato writes passable songs with fairly strong lyrics in the VH1 mold, and that's exactly why she'll get picked up by some major label and tour outdoor **venues** with the likes of Meredith Brooks or Paula Cole. Somehow, despite all my natural inclinations, by **the** fourth song I liked **it** and found it somehow relevant and then I realized why - every song would serve as the perfect backing track for "Dawson's Creek" or "Party of Five". This is the music that's on while I'm getting my hair cut at the mall.

I couldn't wait to hear the MANNIX CD **Pretty Strange** (Write to PO Box 3401, Church **Street** Station, New York, NY 10008). I put it on the CD-ROM player on my computer and listened to the **first** song, "Americana". Lush instrumentation, almost Celtic-sounding arrangements. Then, **the** second track, "Shafter", came on - **a** uptempo pop song...but what's going on? I can't hear the vocals! They're echoing in **the** background. Something's wrong with the CD! Anyway, it took me **a** while to find out what the problem **was** (some renegade software program found its way onto my computer and fucked up all the sound settings), but

once I did, I gave the Mannix record another **shot**. Mannix is Joe Mannix, formerly of Oral Groove, **a** New Jersey power pop band. I should begin this review by letting you all know **that** I used to run **a** record label and **once** released a compilation that featured an Oral Groove track. However, the compilation didn't even sell 100 copies, nobody cared, and the **guy** in Oral Groove wound up hating me - so I can safely review this record without worrying about conflicts of interest.

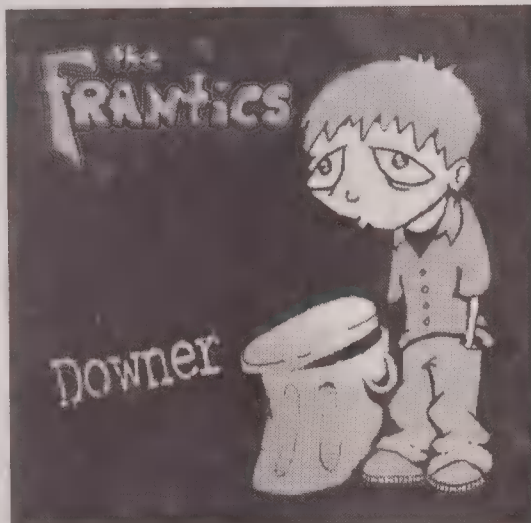
Joe writes great lyrics. His lyrics tell stories and create emotions, and that's exactly what happens with "Americana", the **first** track, which doesn't sound Celtic once **the** echo on the computer is fixed. Joe writes and plays music that falls somewhere between power pop and songwriter's rock like Squeeze and Crowded House. Backed by Chris Peck (ex-Oral Groove) **on** drums and piano, and various members of power pop heroes the Grip Weeds, Joe uses "Pretty Strange" to showcase his songwriting talents, which **are** considerable. The best thing about Oral Groove, however, **was** the **sort** of sing-song **feel** they brought to their music - every Oral Groove show I ever saw reminded me of **a** drunken bash **in** an Irish pub. This record doesn't capture that sweaty, **raw** feel that I remember from Oral Groove. Maybe Joe's not going for **that** feel with this record, but I can't help but think that a passage as brilliant as the crescendo at the end of "Arms Around You", a Brian Wilson-inspired dramatic vocal harmony, would work **a** much better if it got louder and faster and noisier, the way an Oral Groove song would have. Either way, though, Joe's going to wind up writing songs that lots of people hear someday. Mark my words. Save this column and buy **me** a pint when it happens.

I've got a soft spot for any band that bills themselves as "folk-rock", then kicks off their record with a hard-driving, loud rock and roll song. This is what happens with VIGILANTES OF LOVE on their **new** CD **To The Roof Of The Sky** (Meat Market Records, contact Grassroots Media **at** 1815 Division Street, Suite 202, Nashville, TN 37203 because Meat Market didn't put their fucking address on the CD, and how do they expect anyone to find them?). This **is** more down-home American rock and roll that falls somewhere between the generic, emotionless pabulum of Hootie and the honest, soulful but unchallenging rock of Counting Crows but is very much in the vein of the AAA radio formats. This is the kind of record that anyone who reads this column might want to know about, since the music is clean, well-written and well-performed almost-Southern rock

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from Athens, TN. Reading back over this paragraph, I can't tell if this is a good review or a bad review. Doesn't that just piss you off?

This is absolutely unbelievable. Only once or twice in your life do you get to hear music like KEVIN ANDREWS. He sent along a CD that's called either A Manhattan Day In The Life or Broadway Pop and Theater Rock (Caprice International, Box 808, Lititz, PA 17543). The record actually appears to have two titles. Anyway, about ten years ago, I was pestered by a singer/songwriter named Tom Arico, who put out his own CD called Born and Raised on Rock and Roll. Tom sent me one copy of his CD every week for about two months and it was, until now, the worst thing I'd ever heard in my life. We figured out all kinds of things to do with the CDs he sent. We baked them in the oven, soaked them in rubbing alcohol and set them on fire, made Flava Flav necklaces, made ashtrays by melting them with a heat gun — and every time the mailman came, he brought another copy of the disc with him. One drunken night, I lent the only copy of the CD I hadn't destroyed to a girl I knew, and I never saw her again. She took my Tom Arico CD, and now I can never explain to someone how pitifully bad it was. But Kevin Andrews is worse than Tom Arico.

Kevin Andrews has a bio that tells me that he's a Wall Street lawyer, he had a 4.0 GPA at the Wharton School of Business, where he graduated at the top of his MBA program, and that he's very attractive and muscular. No shit. The bio also tells me that he spent less than one hour recording each song, which is painfully clear. What the bio doesn't tell me is that Kevin Andrews writes lyrics that are stupid, they're funny (the lyrics of "Rockadrama" is, basically, a story made up from a list of about a hundred famous rock song titles). The bio doesn't tell us that Kevin Andrews is tone deaf and can't carry a tune, not even close — his singing is so bad I think he's faking. The bio doesn't mention that the instrumental accompaniment is nothing more than cheesy synthesizer and poorly programmed drum machine. This record is so bad it's funny, and everyone should buy one, the same way everyone voted for Hank the Angry, Drunken Dwarf for Sexiest Man of the Year.

I've reviewed some sort of RAY MASON-related product in every column I've done since I started doing this column for Jim, so I'll review his CD Castanets (Wormco, PO Box 266, Northampton, MA 01061). The best thing about the other Ray Mason-related stuff was the down-home, The Band-influenced swagger, with emphasis on odd instruments and soul. Castanets doesn't have that feel. This is a flat-out guitar record that rocks in places, but the rock replaces the back-porch, hellbilly vibe that made this band so great on their record Old Souls Day. This is dangerously close to John Mellencamp for my tastes, and while that might be what Mason's going for with this record, I don't think that's what he does best. Write to Wormco and get a copy of "Old Souls Day", because that's a great, rootsy American rock record. Castanets is only a disappointment.

CHRIS CARTER states in his bio "One of the major reasons I decided to go independent was so that I could have total artistic control, even if it meant working with old equipment and a modest budget". What Chris means is "I haven't had enough interest from major labels yet, so I decided to record a CD, try and get some press, maybe sell a few copies, and prove to a major label that I'm worth their money." His CD Sweet Dream (Mesostic, PO Box 1575, New York, NY 10011-1575) is the kind of record that I'm automatically ready to jump all over — overly hype-driven press materials, slick artwork, pictures of the artist all over the packaging (when nobody knows who you are, is it a good idea to plaster your face all over your record, or should you use the space to make some other artistic statement?). The problem with my strategy is that this record is really good. Chris is an outstanding guitar player and soulful singer who looks like Steve Morse but plays these emotion-packed licks and writes this laid-back, acoustic-laced funky rock that just feels good. About half the songs on the CD don't progress enough to make them worthwhile (there are 15 songs on this disc), but each has something interesting enough to warrant a listen. The lead guitar work in "Overture" reminds me of the opening to CSNY's "Wooden Ships", only more soulful and better recorded. Not to be overlooked is some stellar bass work from Rone Quave. Good job.

GLUECIFIER



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Oddly enough, I put the ROBERT CRENSHAW CD **Full Length Stereo Recordings** (Gadfly, [redacted] above) into [redacted] player without looking [redacted] who it was, listened to the first two songs, and said "This sounds just like Marshall Crenshaw". Well, Robert is Marshall's younger brother and while he's [redacted] the genius his brother is, his approach is very much the [redacted]. Very singable, memorable pop songs with intelligent lyrics and mind blowing vocal melody. Tastefully written and performed, this record falls short of the inevitable comparisons to his brother, but not by much. Robert's music has more of [redacted] overt Roy Orbison influence than Marshall's, and I'm left wondering how tired he must get of having every review written about his record compare his work with Marshall's. I started feeling bad for him, [redacted] I decided I'd start my review again and not mention his brother. Here goes:

ROBERT CRENSHAW - Full Length Stereo Recordings (Gadfly)
Born on February 12, 1917 in San Francisco, Dominic DiMaggio played his entire career with the Boston Red Sox and distinguished himself as a star baseball player during his career. Hampered by poor eyesight, DiMaggio worked his way into the Boston lineup in 1940 where he remained a staple until his retirement in 1953. During his 13-year career, he built a reputation as an excellent hitter, finishing with a lifetime batting average of .298, with 87 home runs and 618 RBI. Although never known for his power or run production, he remains a fan favorite in Boston, where their baseball history is rich and the Red Sox' successes are many. DiMaggio's best [redacted] came in 1950, when he hit .328 with 7 home runs and 70 RBI, and in 1951, when he hit .296 with 12 home runs and 72 RBI. The Red Sox did not win the World Series either year, being beaten out by the New York Yankees and their powerful outfield. It should be noted that this powerful Yankee outfield included Hall of Famer Mickey Mantle, who was just [redacted] rookie being groomed to take over the center field position from the incumbent. This record reminds me of Dom DiMaggio.

Everybody seems to love BETH ORTON. And, wouldn't you know it, she has a new CD out! **Central Reservation** (Arista, a major label) is the name of the album, and some major glossy "music" magazine that knows nothing about music voted her the best songwriter on the planet, or some other such hogwash. Orton is good, though, with vocal phrasings that

remind me of Joni Mitchell. I guess her gimmick is [redacted] she combines folk music with electronic instruments (mostly percussion and sound effects), and this is supposed to be some revolutionary new thing. I've got news for you, [redacted] - Suzanne Vega did this about six years ago on her CD [redacted] **Fahrenheit**. Anyway, Orton's songs, despite being non-revolutionary, are haunting and trippy and mellow. At the end of [redacted] party, when almost everyone is gone, you're out in the yard and you've progressed past beer and [redacted] sipping scotch in silence, Beth Orton is on the stereo.

Lazy, bluesy, funky, piano-based grooves are a cool thing, and the JOSH DODES band do [redacted] well. Sounding like Lyle Lovett with [redacted] three-piece band, the CD **Demonstration** (68 Henry Street #1, New York, NY 10022) is definitely worth [redacted] listen. Josh [redacted] a dynamite piano player with a rough, emotional voice. Although the rhythm section is weak on the first track, they really pick it up on "Do the Do", [redacted] really funky-out thing that reminded me a lot of Little Feat with [redacted] gospel-tinged soul. The CD degenerates into "Windows", an overdramatic piano ballad that nevertheless helped paint the picture of the Josh Dodes Band as a great live [redacted] - [redacted] when Josh plays "Windows", the lights go dim and the college girls [redacted]. The production is weak and the recording lacks punch, but I like [redacted] anyway.

Some short reviews, in case you're not going to be on the bowl long enough to read the whole column:

JOHN TAGLIERI must have gotten Jersey Beat's name from [redacted] magazine like the *Musician's Guide to Touring and Promotion* and sent two of his CDs **Leap of Faith** (65 Webster Ave, Paterson, NJ 07501). He, like so many others before him, didn't bother to find out what kind of zine Jersey Beat is, and because of that, this Richard Marx-sounding *basura* goes right to the used bin.

Cut from the same cloth [redacted] Liz Phair, DIANE IZZO has a better voice, worse lyrics, and the [redacted] producer (Brad Wood). Her CD [redacted] called **One** (Sugar Free, PO Box 14166, Chicago, IL 60614). Buy Phair's *Exile* in **Guyville** instead.

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CHRIS SMITHER has a CD called *Drive You Home Again* on Hightone Records, a usually great country/folk/roots label. Write them at 220 4th St. #101, Oakland, CA 94607 and ask for a catalog, then buy **some** stuff. As for Smither, this is **right** out of "Deliverance". There's no such word as "cain't". He sounds like my friend Art when he's drunk.

God, **the** Mekons are so much fun. Buy their record *I Have Been To Heaven And Back: Their Teeth and other lost fragments of popular culture Vol. 1* (Quarterstick, PO Box 25342, Chicago, IL). They play hard pop with tinges of Celtic instruments, they cover Rod Stewart's "You Wear It Well", and they generally **make** me laugh.

And now for some really great **shit** that you all **need** to go out and buy:

THE CUCUMBERS released **some** fuckin' great record here: Called *Total Vegetility* (Home Office, 173 Clinton St., Brooklyn, NY), they have **a** way of sliding between minor key and major key, spoken and sung, silly and serious **that** reminds me a lot of the Pixies, which is a very, very, very good thing. "Charlie" is **a** driving, rocking, rhythm-driven, off-kilter indie rock anthem. Lots of adjectives in that last sentence. Every song is different, but each has the **same** off-balance quality. The production is flawless, and each song darts off in some unpredictable direction, eventually circling back and darting off somewhere else. The most powerful part of the record is that they sprinkle each song with musical "events" — splashes of noise, melody, or sound effects that happen once or twice in a song but aren't really **a** part of the song's core structure. This lends **it** tremendously to the unpredictability of each song. One cut features dissonant guitars with melodic vocals, the next features melodic music with harsh vocal effects. The one consistent is the amazing driving bass of Kurt Wrobel that carries every song. Not songwriting genius, but experts at pleasing **me** surprises, the Cucumbers need to stick with it until people catch on to the greatness. Check out "8500 Million Miles" for some unreal dissonant harmonies.

Scott E. Moore has been around the New Jersey scene for **a** long time now, and has gotten lots of praise from the local press, but, frankly, I've never gotten it. Within about twenty seconds of the opening track on his new CD *Songs for the Record*, (Wing Tip, PO Box 3395, Hoboken, NJ 07030), however, I knew this record **was** different. When Moore sings "Jump back, kiss myself", he sounds nothing like the Godfather of Soul, but there's emotion all over this record. Quietly acoustic, with hints of organ and pedal steel accenting the rhythmic guitar passages and outstanding vocal performances, Moore is onto something special here. For those of you who don't like James Taylor, fuck off. For those of you who do, something about Moore's song composition recalls Taylor — it may be **the** chord progressions, or the peaceful quality of each song. I should also commend the outstanding piano and organ work of Peter Vitalone, who provides tasteful accompaniment on every track. This one's **a** keeper.

BOB PERRY used **to** play in **a** local band called tabulaRASA. Now he has **a** solo CD called *Light Fuse, Run Away* (Cropduster, 78 Trask Ave, Bayonne, NJ 07002), **which** is straightforward acoustic rock that has

nothing special to offer — the music basically sounds like a bar band covering Van Morrison tunes. However, Perry isn't Van Morrison, so the whole record winds up a collection of weak songs that go nowhere. I read my column from the **same** issue of *Jersey Beat*, and thought that maybe I was a little harsh on some of the bands I reviewed. So in a fit of guilt, I sat here trying **to** find some redeeming qualities about this record so I could at least spritz in some positive comments, but I just can't bring myself to do it. By the way, this was recorded **at** Mix-O-Lyidian studios on Denville, NJ, which is an outstanding studio that has traditionally produced some great sounds. Knowing that, there is a problem with the mastering job on this record — the music sounds thin, all the low end **is** missing, and it has no depth. I listened to **it** on three different CD players, too, I swear.

The cool thing about Bob Perry is **that** he **is** the owner of Cropduster records, and he released *Past Your Eyes* by JULIA GREENBERG (Cropduster, address above). Owning a label that releases records by multiple artists always wins points in my book, and releasing this Julia Greenberg CD is a home run. The opening track, "Pitiful You", is a fantastic pop song with raw guitars and "doot-doot-doot" Big Star backing vocals. The second track, "June", is one of those songs with a super-catchy melody that masks really depressing lyrics, this time about getting old and dying ("and the world slowly turns into the impending doom of one last lovely June"). Did I mention I'm turning 30 **this** summer? Anyway, Greenberg is part songwriter, part rocker, part clever lyricist, part power pop heroine, and all those things meld together to create an outstanding,



The Cropduster Records Collective, including James Mastro, Bob Perry, Julia Greenberg, Chris Merola, and the band Birdy. Photo by Jim Testa

outstanding album. "Happy New Year" wins the title from Mike Errico's record (consult the last issue of JB, jerky) for most pissed off lyrics ("In the interest of presevering all my bitterness and pride/I'll walk home in the **rain** instead of asking for a ride/and with love's desire/I'll set your house on fire"). Plus, a guitar solo straight from George Harrison's brain and into Mark Bosch's guitar, and background vocals from Jill "I Kissed a Girl" Sobule. Shades of Cheap Trick, the Beatles, and Blondie are splattered all over this record, which is a good thing. Congratulations to Bob Perry for owning his own label and putting out the Julia Greenberg CD — definitely the **best** thing I've reviewed for this issue of *Jersey Beat*.

That's **it** for now. Send positive comments about **this** column to me, send hate mail to *Jersey Beat*, and don't trust anyone **over** 30. You **can** contact **me** at mindspring@dromedary.net.

Welcome back to another installment of *deconstruction*, experimental and non-traditional music at its best. Last issue found yours truly on a noise hiatus. Actually, I guess it was more like sick leave. After two night's worth of Einstürzende Neubauten in NYC (including their jet-engine turbine, electric cables singing at 20,000 volts), I needed some time to recover. For those who missed the event of the decade, I'll include the review of the NYC shows by Anna Clare McDuff on the Official Neubauten Homepage -- <http://www.freespeech.org/neubauten/review07-neubauten.htm>.

Well, what do we have in the bag this time around? After 7 years, Tom Waits has finally given us a new album. *Mule Variations* (Epitaph) contains 16 new songs produced by Tom Waits and his wife, Kathleen Brennan. In many respects, *Mule Variations* can be heard as a direct follow up to *Bone Machine*. In fact, I'm now convinced that if both discs were wed into a double disc set, no one could fill the 7-year chasm separating the two. It seems that each song on *Mule Variations* can be linked up with a similar, corresponding song on *Bone Machine*. Perhaps *Bone Machine* should be re-titled to read: *Mule*. Hell, even the "Eyeball Kid," mentioned in 1992's "She's Such a Scream," makes a headlining appearance on *Mule Variations*. The album starts with the bang and stomp of "Big in Japan" which features Les Claypool on bass. This is the one that will be getting the radio play, for sure. It's a funky rocker, like a Tijuana pimp. Then it careens over into "Lowside of the Road" which just shows that overall, *Mule Variations* pays a more overt homage to the blues than any previous Waits album. Granted *Mule Variations* definitely has its weak points (lines like, "Go ahead and call the cops. You don't meet nice girls in coffee shops" sound more like someone trying to impersonate Waits), it's still a slice of Tom Waits' life and perspective, a true grit aesthetic as streetwise as any.

What's better than Eniac and Univac, more powerful than a Jacquard Loom, and able to beat Charles Babage at Pong? Why it's Man Astro-man? of course! *Eeviac* (Touch and Go) is the new program disk designed to rock the binary world into a mass of excited electrons. 13 tracks here, each of which celebrates and mystifies over the electrical evolution of the computer. Not as catchy as most interstellar albums, but hey, it took the computer long enough to catch on to *populus generalis*. Let's wait and see what happens.

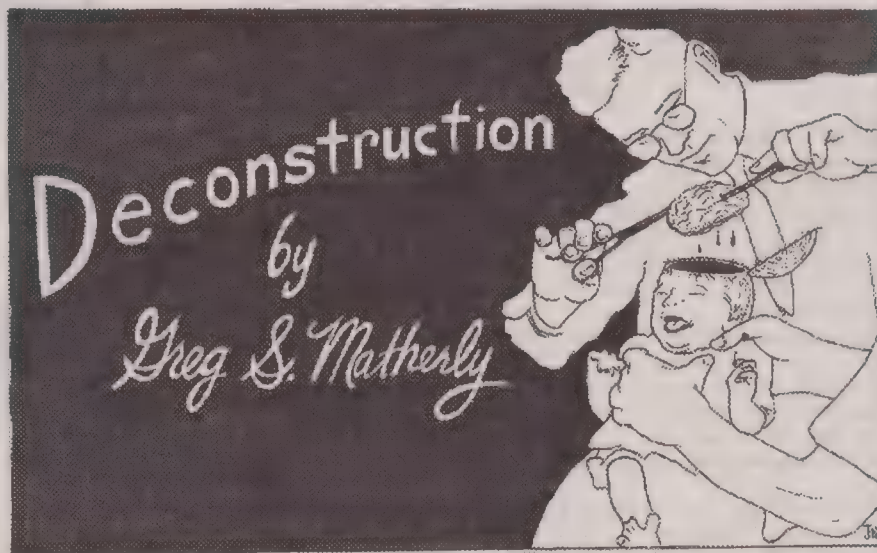
Dusseldorf's Kreidler have just released their 13-track *Appearance and The Park* (Mute). The electronic traits left by Kraftwerk are still showing up in new mutations. A seamless blend of quirky, synth-generated pulses and warm, ambient guitar work—infinite candy madness! These guys know how to integrate the best of vintage electronica and good, progressive melody craftsmanship.

Yet another attempt at mass commercialization and societal acceptance, Frank Zappa has somehow seen to it to force one more compilation of his madness upon the unsuspecting [that means unaware] world. *Son of Cheap Thrills* (Rykco) contains 11 not so well known Frank Zappa tunes compiled with the virgin in mind [as with many Zappa records]. The sampler includes; "Ya Hozna", "Love of My Life", "Night School", "Sinister Footwear", "The Idiot Bastard Son", and much, too much more. It'll make your eyeballs feel dirty, but it's for your good!

Jad Fair, of Half-Japanese infamy, and Jason Williams (The Ruins, X-Ray Eyes, Half-Japanese, et al.), have been writing and recording songs together since '96. The outcome of 11 years is now available for your perusal. Over 20 songs on vinyl and 35 tracks on the CD, *Enjoyable Songs* (Alternative Tentacles) is full of the hyper-mundane and erratic upbeat goofiness (a la Daniel Johnston) you've come to expect from Jad Fair and friends. You won't catch them on singer/songwriter unplugged night on MTV, but in a perfect world, you would.

The one-man band is a dying art in desperate need of some attention. Wait no more, the amazing spellcaster, Mr. Quintron, is here to usher in a revival of the overblown Leslie speaker cabinet. The fourth and latest Quintron album, *These Hands of Mine* (Skin Graft), follows up his majestic, mysterious, *Satan is Dead (Do the Stomp)*. Mr. Quintron and faithful servant Miss Pussycat, are an amazing duo that needs to be immortalized on a Memphis sidewalk alongside Hazel Adkins and Jesco White. Rockabilly/garage-rock inspired lunacy, and Mr. Quintron's own invention—the Drum Buddy, fuels these two primitive preachers through numbers like, "Meet Me at the Club House", "The Creeper", "Caveman 5000", and "Wild Indians." Let's not forget the supernatural puppet shows that Miss Pussycat performs for their live performances.

What would this lewd, lascivious world be without a double disc



tribute to pornography. *Suck It and See* is a collection of various dance/dub/rap/rock artists from the Pussy Foot label plus a few of their friends, all of whom are dishing it out as they see it, hear it, and feel it. How about a sensual seventies paradise, drenched in da' funk, or maybe you prefer a gentle, erotic ambience laced with sighs of pleasure, or... I know, you dig the true grit of Atlanta's infamous Clermont Lounge and the story-telling prose of Tiff McGinnis. Whatever your bag, *Suck it and See* is an erotic treat. Some artists include; Kensuke Shima, Daddy Ingle, Fantastic Plastic Machine, Nick Faber, DJ Miku, Deadly Avenger, Howie B., and Charl Charl.

That's a wrap for now. Send all questions, comments, promos, etc., to *deconstruction*, P.O. Box 2771 MTSU, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. E-mail: eng2001a@mtsu.edu

Why Wowie Zowie? Cause I love the Mothers Of Invention song, and I think it sounds cool. Anyway now that we've got that out of the way, this column will essentially cover pop/rock music in all the beautifully mutated forms that I find appealing. If you want to label them lets just say: psychedelic, experimental, orchestral pop, power pop, garage pop/rock, space rock, indie-pop/rock, just to give you an idea of what I'm into and what I'll be covering. I'll be reviewing releases from "modern" groups as well as the reissues from the groups who invented and inspired these countless new bands to make great innovative pop music. I'm also gonna do some live reviews from time to time and hopefully some interviews occasionally. So get comfy on the porcelain throne of your choice as I hope you will find this column amusing, with my views and opinions on the tunes and groups that make my life more fun and interesting.

To kick things off let's start with The Elephant 6 pop maestros, The Apples in Stereo. They're back with a great new CD EP, *Her Wallpaper Reverie* (SpinArt), which has been well worth the wait, let me tell ya. The Apples go more psychedelic this time around than previous efforts, and are a little less upbeat. The songs are longer, which gives the Apples more room to experiment with their brand of 60's influenced pop. There is a definite Beatles feel on this CD, with cuts like "Her Room is a Rainy Garden" and "Strawberry Fire". The album tells a story about a girl named Ruby who ends up spending the day in her room listening to records and stares at the wallpaper on her walls, which changes with her moods. The song "Ruby" is a classic pop tune, while "Drifting Pattern" is a really fun moog instrumental, that sounds like Romper Room on acid. A handful of classic pop tunes and some real cool instrumental soundscapes makes *Her Wallpaper Reverie* the perfect rainy day pop record, which is what the always amazing Apples set out to do. This should hold over fans until the fall just in time for their double album.

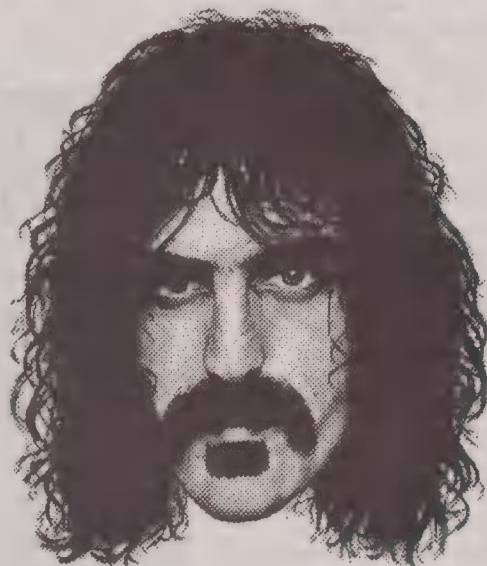
Now that we're already in Elephant 6 land, I'll move onto those mad scientists of sweet psychedelic pop, The Oliva Tremor Control. Their latest, *Black Foliage, Volume One* (FlyDaddy), is a psychedelic masterpiece, with its Sgt. Pepper feel and it's Beach Boys harmonies. What make this record amazing is all the different weird sound samples and effects that pop up in between songs before and after them. *Black Foliage* is not only a fun album to listen to, but an interesting listen as well. I was lucky enough to catch OTC on their tour out to the Bay Area; let's just say I haven't seen or been to a show this cool or exiting in a long time. Crazy samples, instrumentation (a member played a saw with a bow) and tripped-out offbeat short film and images as a back drop. OTC are not to be missed the next time they roll through your town. A great band stretching the limits of yesterday and today's pop music.

Next up is the long anticipated *Terror Twilight* (Matador), from the kings of indie-rock, Pavement. This time around, Malkmus and the guys decided to go completely Hi-Fi, lose some of the noise, and opt for a much tighter and smoother melodic feel, not unlike some great 70's A&M pop band. There are also a lot of other cool sounds not heard on previous records; "Folk Jam" has some nice finger-pickin guitar action, while "Cream Of Gold" has a cool space-rock feel to it, and "Platform Blues" possesses a bluesy classic rock that undeniably rocks. There are also some great pop gems here like the bouncy "Carrot Rope" and the classic Pavement sounding "Spit On A Stranger". Stephen Malkmus' lyrics are more personal and direct than on past records, but just as witty and cryptic as ever. The Hi-Fi sound they achieved on *Terror Twilight* has a lot to do with English hotshot producer Nigel Godrich, who has a knack for giving bands a slick spacious sound that has a timeless quality to it, he produced Radiohead's highly acclaimed *OK Computer* and more recently Beck's *Mutations*. *Terror Twilight* has a classic rock record feel, with Pavement still sounding like Pavement. *Terror Twilight* is by far the band's most melodically consistent and enjoyable record since their inception. There are also enough trade-mark Pavement tweaked out effects in the record that Godrich's slick producing style that doesn't detract from the band's likeable qualities, he enhances them. I'm concerned. Pavement Mach II is here. Amen.

Brooklyn's LadyBug Transistor has just released their 2nd full length, *The Albemarle Sound*, which is out now on the Merge label. Ladybug Transistor create some of the sweetest and smoothest pop with a definite nod to 60's pop sensations Burt Bachrach and the Carpenters. The songs are performed with a combination of male/female vocals, trumpet, an array of organs and jangly guitars. The *Albemarle Sound* transports listener back in time, it could easily be the soundtrack for a 60's movie like *Barefoot In the Park*, *Breakfast at Tiffenys* or *Valley Of The Dolls*. Sweet and sad pop songs that melt in your heart not in your hands.

Sparklehorse are back with *Good Morning Spider* (Capitol), which continues Mr. Linkous's strange left of center pop brew. The man can do no wrong, with his own brand of Neil Youngish ballads, and tweaked-out fuzzy backwoods pop. If you've never heard Sparklehorse I suggest you go buy this record and their debut as soon as humanly possible. Sparklehorse are one of the most talented and eclectic bands to be makin music for a major label in a long time, and

wowie



zowie

by howie rick kutner

for those of you who drooled over 1995's *Vivadxiesubmarinetranmissionplot* leave your bib on, *Good Morning Spider* doesn't disappoint in the least. If Mr. Linkous keeps writing songs like these and continues to put out awe-inspiring records out *Good Morning Spider* we'll all have some thing to look forward to. An eclectic pop genius in a world of mediocrity.

Occasionally I'll take the gamble of buying a record because of the art work on the cover. Sometimes it can be representative of the music inside the package, sometimes not. England's Mojave3 is one of those records, that thankfully falls in the later category. Two surfers with their boards on a grassy knoll with the sun beaming down with the ocean in the distance, and cool fonts to boot. What can I say I'm

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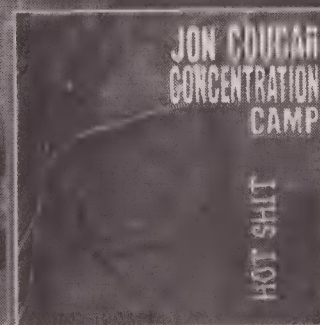
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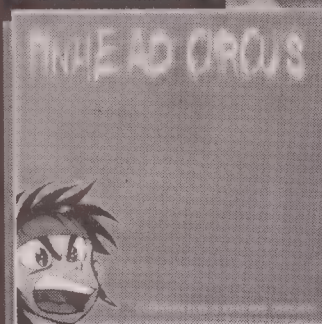
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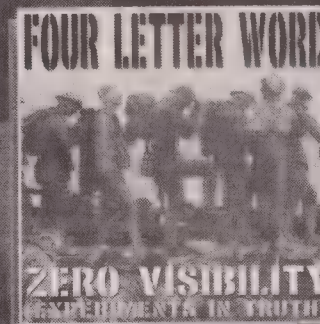
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■ sucker for art and packaging, to me it has a lot to do with the over-all presentation of a band. Mojave3's *Out Of Tune* (4AD) is some of the most lush beautiful folk rock around these days, with lyrics and vocals oozing emotion and sensitivity. Nick Drake comes to mind, and with that sweet drifting 4AD atmospheric feel, *Out Of Tune* is ideal record to calm one's nerves. Simply great songs with lots of heart and soul. The perfect soundtrack for some teenage love story set in Malibu in 1976 with dunebuggy races, lots of blonde hair, surfboards, and grass. Far out, Groovy.

Seven More Minutes (Maverick), the new Rentals record, is a joyful outing of wave-inspired pop sunshine to brighten anybody's bad day. This time around M. Sharp and company have (excuse the pun) sharpened their pop chops and songwriting skills to create one of this year's great pop records. The perfect record to blast out the car windows this summer. Richer in texture than 1996's debut, *Seven More Minutes* is proof that the Rentals have become more than a Weezer side project.

Thanx to Rykodisc there are 2 new Zappa compilations, *Cheap Thrills* and *Son of Cheap Thrills*. The idea behind it, put a chock full of classic Zappa live or original and put them on one nifty CD for your listening pleasure for an amazing low price. I bought both for \$3.99 each! They each have about 13 songs each, with original zany art work from 60's and 70's Zappa artist, Cal Schenkel. Spanning his whole career, with classic Mothers' tunes like WPLJ and later gems like "Catholic Girls", "Bobby Brown", "Disco Boy" and "My Guitar wants Kill Your Mama". These discs are a great chance for people who have always been interested in checking out the man's work, but wasn't where to start. Personally I think the Mother's debut *Freak Out!* is the best place to start, but these to gems are a cheap way to check out what you've been missing all these years. What else can I say about a guy who was and still is even after his death way the fuck ahead of his time.

Although it came out last year, I had to include it in the column being the best record in I don't know how long. That record being *Deserter's Songs* (V2/BMG) by the New York band Mercury Rev. Next to the Flaming Lips and Sparklehorse, the Rev are one of the few bands around that are truly gifted when it comes to making awe-inspiring pop music, that is bound to be a real "classic". When I mean classic, I don't mean Bachman Turner Overdrive, I'm talking in league with early Bowie, Syd Barrett, Beachboys circa *Pet Sounds* and the Beatles. The British press have called *Deserter's Songs* the "Album of the Year", and believe you me, they now what they are talking about. This piece of music could be put in the same league as Bowie's *Hunky Dory* and *Pet Sounds* as far as I'm concerned. I got to see them when they played Bimbos in SF back in April and, well it was.....absolutely staggering. Simply stunning music from that place they call the Catskills.

Mercury Rev's longtime compadres The Flaming Lips are about to release their 10th record *The Soft Bulletin* (Warner Bros), which I've been lucky enough to get a promo, from a buddy at a record store. Extravagant is the word I'd have to use. It seems ever since *Clouds Taste Metallic*, Wayne Coyne and the Lips have had the Brian Wilson bug fusing their signature tweaked-out psychedelic noise-pop with Pet Soundish orchestrated pop. Then came 97's *Zeireeka*, which furthered the Lips' exploration in experimental pop with an over-the-top 4 disc set of strange sounds that can be played by themselves or all 4 once on 1,2,3, or four separate disc players. I always wondered how their A&R guy at Warners pitched the idea to the big boss - 4 CD's, no hit songs, and you need 4 CD players to listen to it in its entirety. The boss was in a good mood that day. Anyway, you get the idea, the Lips in the last four or five years have been heading in a certain direction, and *The Soft Bulletin* is the total realization of the influences they have lovingly absorbed. The result: Huge and I mean HUGE SOUND. At first your kinda missing the fuzzy guitars, but eventually that passes and you get lost in the individual pop pieces (songs). Chalk another one up for Oklahoma's longest running and strangest mind-blowing export, the Lips.

Darla Records out of San Francisco has to be one of the most constantly reliable sources of great indie pop acts. As luck would have it they've just released the super inexpensive summer sampler *Little Darla has a Treat for You*, Volume 12/Summer 1999. It's a delightfully fun mixed bag of silky smooth indie pop, quirky pop, experimental pop and beyond. Great groups like from bubblegum to the sky, pacifica, Apples in stereo, teach me tiger just to name a few. Five bucks well spent. Thanx Darla!

HOTWAXX:

Here are some note worthy vinyl finds, old and new, that I've scored over the last month or so. It is my aim to share some info on bands that have gone undetected by my ears previously, or just kinda slipped through the cracks to speak. I found the self-titled LP by the Portland band Sone (Earth To Records) which apparently was released sometime in 95. I had recognized the name on the Darla Records website a while back, so I thought I'd give it a shot, seeing that 4 bucks isn't much of a gamble. To my surprise, Sone create some really melodic yet quirky fuzz pop with lots of old analog keyboards and noisy guitars. Sone is in the new wavish territory as The Rentals, except they opt for the organic lo-fi indie sound, as opposed to the slicked-out sound of the Rentals. I don't know if Sone still exist, but if they do I'd love to see them catch them live.

A couple Fridays ago I decided it wasn't going to be a Blockbuster night so I cruised up to The Ivy Room in Albany (which is the next town north of Berkeley) to check out some garage pop band from Minneapolis, The Conquerors. To my surprise they were workin' the joint, girls and guys were gettin' down like it was LA 60's Go-Go hot spot. The Conquerors' secret ingredients? One part Zombies, one part Dave Clark Five, with soulful vintage keyboards, fuzzed-out guitar, and two singers with two different styles and a lot of groovy bass lines to keep your butt shakin'. After they played I bought a copy of their 9 song 10" *Turn On Tune Out Drop Dead* (Get Hip) which I've be groovin' out to ever since. Go support these chaps when they pull threw yer village, you'll say, "thanks, Howie!"

Every once in a while you'll be thumbin' threw the used record bins, and you can stumble upon a total gem. Which means its cheap and a major collector's item to boot that would normally be hanging on the store wall for ten times as much as you found it for. The Warner/Reprise 1969 *Song Book* is that record, double record to be exact. Touting 23 different acts and 40 selections, old and new, it's got some of the more popular ones, who I can take or leave, your Van Morrisons, Joni Mitchells, Arlo Guthries, and the Everly Bros. Then the good stuff, two cuts from Zappa and the Mothers, two cuts from legendary Greenwich Village beatniks The Fugs, a couple o' tunes from song writer and Brain Wilson collaborator Van Dyke Parks, The Kinks, The Electric Prunes, a young Neil Young, Zappa's insane prodigy Wee Man Fisher, The Beau Brummels, Hendrix, and the one and only freak himself Tiny Tim! All this for only \$3.95. I can't imagine this LP being easy to find, but if you can pick it up, it's the shit.

Howie's Vinyl Pix

Here are a few 7-inches I came across in the last couple months that are definitely worth searching out well.

The Mooney Suzuki 7-inch *Taking Me Apart* (The Self-Starter Foundation) is a must for anyone who digs The Velvet Underground or sees themselves bouncing off the walls to Crazy Rhythms by seminal Hoboken popsters the Feelies. Three tunes with great hooks and a manic pop feel to keep things movin'. I hope these guys finally put out a full length and tour soon.

Roads To Space Travel is a super fun trio from Baltimore who have just released a brand new spankin' 7-inch (Desoto). It's called *Meatballs For Lunch!* and it's nothing but wholesome zany pop from

side A to side B. RTST ■■■ great band I've ■■■■ them I've met them (nice group o' fellers). They are very likable, combining the best parts of Devo/Television with ■ new/no ■■■■ feel, chiming guitars and warm oozing moogs. These guys should do the same ■ the Mooney Suzuki, put out a whole record and then tour, better yet tour together! " Oh yeah almost forgot, there is a nifty little comic book included called "A Lil' Colt's Four Star Tour Of The Pentagon", which really nutty like the comic strip Red Meat. Great little slab o' wax, worth every cent.

The Silver Jews features singer-songwriter David Berman and singer Stephen Malkmus and Bob from Pavement. They just released a full length not too long ago called *American Water* (Drag City) and sides A & B are off the record. SJ's serve up their ■■■■ style of ripe folk and country tinged indie-rock. The 7" *I am Never Alone....* (Cosmic Debris, Ltd.) is a major tease. The songs are sooo damn good, you just want to hear more. So find this 7", listen to it. Then go buy all their other records. Then smile a lot.

TOILETPAPER:

I just thought I'd share with you a couple of music publications that I've come across in the last few months that really float my log. **TAPE OP** is magazine that focuses on home recording techniques as well as tips for the studio. Its packed with useful facts and info and interviews with the likes of Steve Albini, Butch Vig, Fugazi, Sparkle-horse and the list goes on. This magazine ■ a great resource for the beginner with ■ 4 track or for a band that wants an idea on how to get that "certain" sound, before they head into the studio. The magazine's motto is "A Magazine About Creative Music Recording".

Another great read is **Sound Collector** out of Philly. Its \$6.50, but it's well worth it. Fashioned after Readers Digest in size, SC ■ packed with informative and in-depth interviews with some of today's most cutting edge artists. In the new issue #3, there are great interviews with Mercury Rev, Silver Jews, Pan-Sonic, Vocokesh, The Ronnelles, and many more. Oh yeah, it comes with ■ CD too, with tracks from the afore mentioned bands and handful of other experimental pioneers. Search this one out.

Next issue I'll hopefully have some live reviews for ya as well ■ a super cool interview, and of course lots of record reviews. So until then, put on the sun block, strap on your Speedo or the aquatic garment of your choice, and hang loose.

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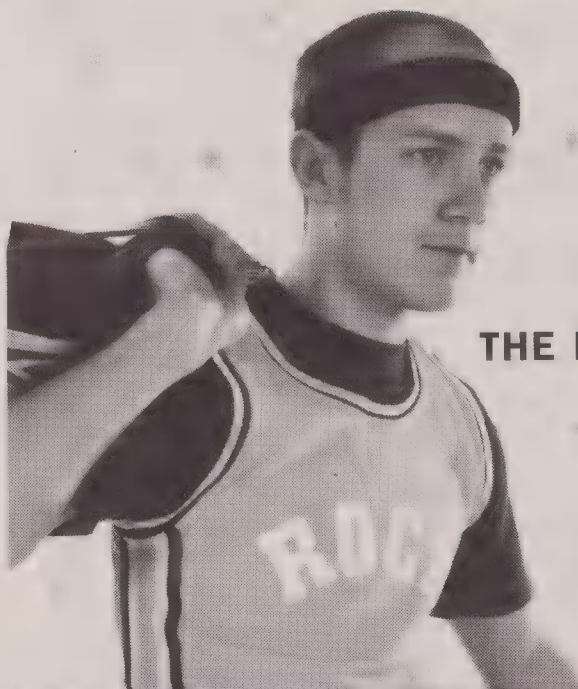
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LUNACHICKS - *Luxury Problem* (Go-Kart) The Lunachicks' 6th full-length CD! This is a great accomplishment in itself, but sadly, the band has never lived up to its live show on any release, and this one is no exception. The elements are there but for whatever reasons, the end results aren't as powerful. *Luxury Problem* contains some of the best songs the band has ever come up with; "I'll Be The One," "Say What You Mean," and the title track show amazing growth and maturity, especially on Theo's vocals (she remains one of the most underrated singers in rock today.) The departure of rhythm guitarist Sindi doesn't seem to have hurt much. The riffs are still catchy in the 'Chicks' punk-metal-pop style. The lyrics are as witty as ever too, but overall, this is just short of classic. I expect nothing short of excellence from this band at this point. Sorry.

BIOHAZARD - *New World Disorder* (Def Jam) Biohazard are one of the pioneers of the rap-hardcore movement that seems to have popped up in almost every corner across America. They've been kicking since 1988, sold tons of records, and consistently draw well on tour. But their last two studio albums have been less than inspired. *New World Disorder* puts Biohazard back on track for world domination. The disc is not a departure from the traditional Biohazard NY-style stomp-metal, with rappy verses and gang call

anthem choruses. But the fire seems to be back, they sound hungry and pissed off again. This is a good thing! Standout cuts like "Breakdown," "Resist" and "Switchback" are classic Biohazard - well-written, honed, upbeat, brutal tales of life on the streets. Onyx pop up to rap on the title track for good measure. Welcome back.

LIMP BIZKIT - *Significant Other* (Flip/Interscope) Korn's #1 sons, Limp Bizkit, are back with their second CD. It's a slicker, more polished version of *3 Dollar Bill, y'All*. Sad but true is the fact that this Jacksonville, Florida band is going to sell 3 million copies of this regardless of whether it's good or bad. Most of the CD is unimpressive, but the production (by Terry Date) is first-rate, and the first single, "Nookie," has enough hooks and a clever chorus good enough to cover up the fact that 5 songs here have almost identical vocal melodies. Give Limp Bizkit credit for being willing to tour two and a half years straight & do whatever they had to do in order to become stars. They are huge and this CD is just good enough to keep them on top of the rock world. It doesn't hurt that they've surrounded themselves this time with lots of

other "stars" to play the game, including Korn's Jonathan Davis, Scott Weiland of Stone Temple Pilots, and Rap Flavor of the Month Eminem. Let the machine roll on.

FANTOMAS - *Amenza al Mundo* (Ipecac) Combine Faith No More, Mr. Bungle, Dave Lombardo (Slayer, Grip Inc.), Buzz Osborne (the Melvins), and Mr. Bungle bassist Trevor Dunn, stick them in a dark room with Patton conducting, and you have Fantomas. This is not for the weak, narrow-minded, melody-loving ears of most of the world. It's truly experimental, a sound effects-heavy soundtrack-like album. No song titles, no songs, just some cool blasts of noise, ideas, and textures. 30 "pages" inspired by comic books, most under 2 minutes long. Fantomas deliver a very interesting live show that translates well to

Pennsylvania underground classic over the years. This time the Hoodz are sporting more hip hop influences and less straight-up Beastie Boys ill-ing, although the band - with 3 white rappers, backed by a live band of drums, guitar, bass, and DJ - will probably always draw comparisons to the Beasties. But get over it, the Suburban Hoodz play by their own rules. *Genuine B-Boyz* delivers rhymes and beats of suburban life mixed with good guitar and bass grooves, and hints of old-school Philly hardcore. Loads of growth from the first CD. How the hell can Kid Rock and bands like Kottonmouth Kings get record deals when bands like Suburban Hoodz have to DIY? I have a feeling 1999 may end up being the year for Philly's underground heroes.

CHEAP TRICK - *Music For Hangovers* (Cheap Trick Unltd.) Last year, Cheap Trick celebrated the re-release of *Cheap Trick At Budokan* (the full-set version, finally!), which through the test of time has proven to be the best live record ever released. While many of their well-written early records seemed to lose much of the kick and punch of the band's live show, the songs have stood up well. Many current bands in indie and alternative land have to tip their hats to Cheap Trick for paving the way to rock bliss. To commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the *Budokan* album, Cheap Trick hit the road, playing three-night stands in selected

cities where they'd perform their first three albums (*Cheap Trick*, *In Color*, and *Heaven Tonight*) track for track on consecutive nights, mixed in with other classic and rarely played songs from their 15 studio albums. Amazingly, the songs always sound better live from Cheap Trick, even today. *Music For Hangovers* was recorded live in Chicago during a four-night stand last May, featuring songs from the first six studio records. They sound full of energy, life, and dynamics, as if they were written yesterday. Another great live album from the best live rock band on the planet.

MR. BUNGLE - *California* (Warner Bros.) It's 1999 and Mr. Bungle have finally released their third CD in 15 years of being a band. Anyone that would try to predict the sound of the CD probably wouldn't come close. Of course, it's completely different from the porn-metal rock sounds of their 1991 debut CD. No one could have predicted the twists and turns of 95's followup, *Disco Volante*, probably one of the most uncommercial albums ever released on a major label. Now this... *California*. Elements of the first two CD's, mixed with pop music. Straight-ahead pop, lounge, full-blown



The Hard Stuff

by frank phobia

CD. If you like Mr. Bungle's 2nd record, *Disco Volante*, or the Boredoms, John Zorn, or the sound of fingernails scratching a blackboard, you will need this release.

REVEILLE - *Laced* (Elektra) Reveille represent Boston's newest entry into the loud-rock battlefield - part rap-rock, part metal ala' Kid Rock, Korn, Limp Bizkit, etc. However, to be honest, the band does have enough of its identity to rise above the pack. The future for these five teenagers is going to be filled with exposure - dates on this summer's Warp Tour, shows with God-mack, Powerman 5000, etc. Let the masses decide the verdict. I'm willing to bet their explosively tight live show mixed with fresh riffs, powerful vocals, and killer songs like "Judas," "Perfect World," and "Aftertaste" will pave the way for a great year for the band. A guest appearance from Cypress Hill's B.Real doesn't hurt either.

SUBURBAN HOODZ - *Genuine B-Boyz* (215 Records, PO Box 34512, Philadelphia PA 19101) Philadelphia's white-boy rap-rock hip-hop-hardcore fun-loving kings finally release the followup to 1995's *This Boy's Life*, which has turned out to be a

swing, tons of surf guitar riffs, and soothing vocal harmonies delivered with buckets of effortless ~~harmony~~ and wit, the kind that only Mike Patton could dream up. "Sweet Charity" and "Vanity Fair" have Motown doo-wop vibes under the orchestrated, laid-back Beach Boys slant to Top 40 gone wrong. "Golem II: The Bionic Vapour Boy" and "Goodbye Sober Day" are nightmare circus avant-garde ditties with more twists than a bad horror movie. Throw in touches of chants, jazz, metal, rockabilly, disco, film soundtrack sound of the 70's and 80's, and you'll come close. But the true art and beauty to this CD is that it's actually enjoyable and fun to listen to! And that's a major accomplishment.



Specimen X

SPECIMEN X - *The Final Hour* (Roddog Records; <http://www.roddog.com>) With any young band, so many things can go wrong with your first "official" CD. First you write songs, record them in a strange setting (a studio,) then you mix it (generally a nightmare,) come up with some artwork (image everything, right?), and then you give your baby the world and hope for the best. Specimen X got most of it right on the first try. Long metal-tinged songs with hints of Faith No More, Pantera, and classic metal punk, with a touch of hardcore thrown in. The lyrics are thrown at you in poetic schemes of hope and despair. Singer Sean

Gallagher has a great, dynamic throat which seems to be the band's strongest weapon. The only problem is that the mix is not good at all, with very loud vocals & guitars that fade in and out of "powerful" range. But I expect great things from this Boston-area young band. The best part is that they

seem to be worried about creating their own sound rather than following the lead of other hot bands of the moment. They're worth checking out, especially when you're tired of the straightahead hardcore or Korn-type clones.

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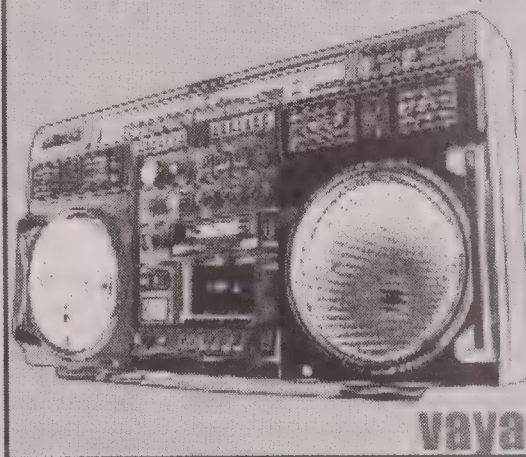


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ANTIC (PO Box 5367, Wesleyan Stn., Middletown CT -6459) Antic is a young Connecticut trio whose guitarist/singer Joel and drummer Jon were in the pop/punk Not My Ritchie, reviewed in our last issue. This group's music is darker and more complex; sinuous bass lines undulate beneath moody guitar parts and nervous drums. This batch of six songs finds the entire group flexing its creative muscles, mixing odd time signatures, dissonant guitar sounds, and odd melodies, with guitars, bass, and drums each seizing an equal role in each song (the vocals take the backseat, only coming in occasionally between intense instrumental parts on most tracks.) Clearly there's a lot of experimentation still going on here as the band tries to find its sound; songs vary from swaggering emo/punk anthems to minimalist K Records-style grl pop with bassist Jordyn on lead vox. Antic isn't quite there yet but I like where they're headed. - Jim Testa

CORE DEVICE - "God & Man" (14 Field Ave, Red Bank NJ 07701) The only words that come to mind are "Operatic Metal." You can just picture naked Valkyries, barechested Viking warriors, and swooping dragons that will undoubtedly festoon the sleeve of this band's debut CD, whenever they get to release it. But first they've got to get into a better studio - the Metallica-esque guitars need serious beefing up, they're way too thin on this production, and the keyboards have been buried in the mix. Otherwise, these guys have got it all down - the heroic vocals, technical guitar solos, pounding drums and bass, and songs that read like chapters from Joseph Campbell's history of mythology - "God & Man," "Raped," "Seven Seas"... I just hope they leave enough money in the budget for the fireworks. - Jim Testa

ENTROPY - "The Parallel Collide" (Craig Balan, 7 Le Parc Court, West Windsor, N.J., 08550). Three song demo; everything done by Craig. It is entitled "Alien Voice" and sounds sort of like the guy is singing through a sewage grate or transmitting from Mars. Most of the music appears to come out of a computer. But it's quite an effective and compelling mix. Emo type songs sung with a death metal voice in an acoustic pop style. - Rodney Leighton

IMPASSE (c/o BGL, PO Box 425, Ithaca NY 14851) Brutal pummeling old-school hardcore, leavened by the occasional melodic bridge. Dark, brooding lyrics ("the company of the [blank] is all that awaits," or "you expect me to love, war [blank] me everything.") Production is a bit tinny, especially the drums, but overall, if you like clenched-fist moshpit hardcore seething with angst and anger, you'll probably get off on this. - Jim Testa

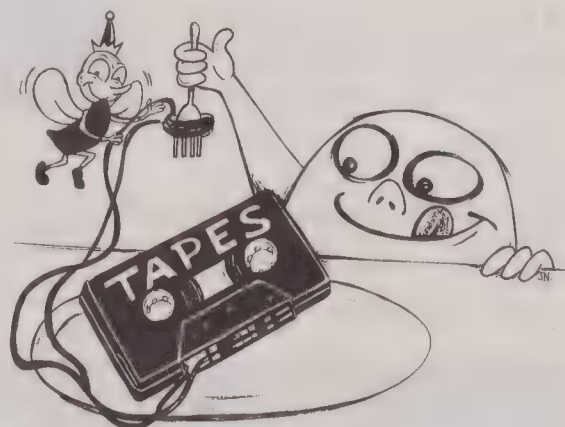
LOOSE - (42 Valley Road #6, Montclair NJ 07042) The latest Loose demo tries a few new tricks. "Sparkle" and "Don't Bring Me Down" are jazzy romantic ballads with lead vocals by guest chanteuse Laura Hysop quite unlike anything this long-lived combo has done in any of its many incarnations over the years. "To Hell With Poverty" is, of course, a cover of the classic Gang Of Four anthem, a perfect showcase for frontman Paul Decolator's sizzling guitar and guttural punk vocals. "My Neighbor Klaus" and "Black Widow Double Seal," with Decolator and bassist Toby Record switching off on lead vocals, represent a welcome return to form, as both recall the mid-tempo pop songwriting with a punk twist that Loose mastered back in the early Nineties. Overall, this demo is a vast improvement on its predecessor and an encouraging sign that this version of Loose is finally finding its voice. - Jim Testa

LUCKY - (Jess, 732-238-9483) 5 song demo - Lucky, are one of the better new bands that are emerging on the local music scene. Propelled by the upfront vocals of Jess, the band will get your attention. "One Last" - about one last summer together, starts out as a jangly pop tune then towards the end it evolves into some hard ska. Rita/guitar, April/bass, & Dara/drums, drive the music, and make it a local point. The last song "Henrietta Kat," (an instrumental), is catchy and tight. There's a lot of emotion and energy packed into just 5 songs! - Phil Rainone

NO WAY NARC (No address) This is the new New Brunswick supergroup, featuring Chris Pierce (of Doc Hopper and Casanova-

cane). It's pure cheesy old school stoner metal, heavy on the distortion. My old college roommates Decker and Bennett, who ate acid like Pezz, would have had multiple orgasms listening to this stuff. The question isn't whether No Way Narc rocks; the question is, are you experienced? - Jim Testa

PALOMAR - "Looking Good" (212 799 8497) Rachel (ex-Trixie Belden) sings in such an unnaturally high voice that it reminds of the days when I'd get 7-inches recorded at 33 1/3 and accidentally play them at 45. If you can get by the vocals, though, Palomar's giddy New Wavey pop tunes, jangly guitars, and Matt Hauser's steady drums and pithy backup vocals pay off. Bassist Sasha takes the lead vocal on "NAWBLA," a catchy tale of high school romance. Matt and Rachel duet on the weird little ditty "Robert" and the band gets even quirkier on "Special Lunch," featuring Matt on accordion. A nice little off-kilter combo that combines the best of Trixie Belden with more solid musicianship and some interesting songwriting. It will be fun to see where they go next. - Jim Testa



J.M. REIMER - "Demos From Novella" (5800 Belmont Ave., Dallas, TX, 75206) Super demo. Thirty seconds after the third song ends, the tape clicks off. Flip it over and you get the same 3 tunes. THAT'S the way to do a demo tape. Taped on a 4-track, these 3 operatic odes to rock music sound very good and made me wish there were a bunch more. After about 8 plays, I got tired of changing the tape, but that's the only reason I stopped listening to this one. Very cool sound, if you can get into rock music arias. - Rodney Leighton

SLOW FORE (74 Aldie St.#2, Allston, MA., 02134) So, these 3 guys from the Boston area who have all been in various bands formed this group. Six weeks later they took 10 hours and produced this tape in one of their living rooms, I guess. Pretty good material. Nice easy listening, building to near metal-like instrumentation and much the same type of singing. Most of the 5 songs are melodic guitar and drum tracks building slowly to a mild crescendo during which the fairly good vocalist comes in with a style bordering on metal but not quite. Cool. They have plans for full length release this summer. I hope I get it. - Rodney Leighton

THROWIN' FISTS - "The O.C. Sessions" (PO Box 3101, Kearny NJ 07032) Throwin' Fists represents the long-awaited return (by me, at least) of the Kearny Punk Rock Mafia, with former Jersey Beat contributor (and KPM ringleader) Tom Angelli on bass. This is old school, in your face NJ punk, equal parts Bouncing Souls and Adrenaline OD. Songs about finding yourself, getting drunk, getting into fights, with metal guitars, squealing vocals, and driving drums. Inspirational. "It's more punk not to be punk than to follow the pack." Welcome back. - Jim Testa

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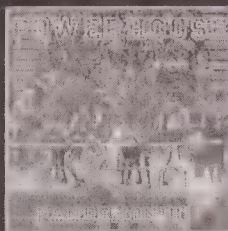
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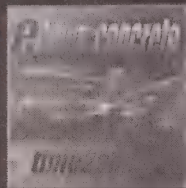
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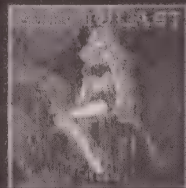
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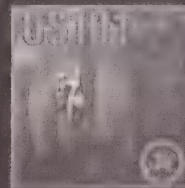
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Joe Wawyrzniak has been one of Jersey Beat's hardest working contributing writers for years now, and we felt it was time that our readers got a sense of uniquely hyperbolic, jivin' and jazzy stylistics.

DOGWOOD -More Than Conquerors (Tooth & Nail Records, PO Box 12698, Seattle, WA 981 11) According to this rage-ridden and angst-fueled San Diego punk quartet, life's a real headache-inducing bitch that's just cast a sizable litter of puppies. So, what's a man to do? Why, you get a few buddies, write a batch of venom-spewing songs about your boiling anger, cut loose somethin' savage in the studio, and produce one powerfully pissed-off lion's roar of an album. Does it work? Boy, does it ever, man. From the raspy, hissing through clenched teeth vocals to the tautly coiled spring intensity of the punchy arrangements to the sheer breakneck speed and ferocity of the playing to the unsparingly blunt lyrics, this searing effort is a fiercely effective means to an end of purging those foul toxic emotions out of your pent-up frustrated system. Now, that's an accolade and a half.

JAKKPOT & LES STITCHES -Electric Live (Onefoot Records, P.O. Box 30666 Long Beach, CA 90853) A so-killer-it's-positively-lethal double mega-dose of live'n'wired punk rock noise fury from two hellaciously high-decibel caterwauling bands. Jakspot deliver a raw, rippin', wildassed 7 song sonic onslaught that's nothin' but screeching snot-choked vocals, pummel the into submission drums, string-shredding hacksaw guitar riffs, full-throttle frantic steam-rolling tempos, breezily irreverent humor, and enough aggressively antisocial punk rock attitude to make sneering Muck the whole world! misanthropes of us all LES Stitches come through with a scorchingly shit-hot 9 song serving of raucous, tear-the-house-to-pieces punk rock insanity, kicking down the door and cracking lotsa skulls with an almighty aural assault of angry shouted vocals, a shoot-the-eardrum-rupturing-works ferocious approach to banging out a tune, the expected trashed-out nutso humor, thrashy arrangements that radiate pure menace, and that time-honored gleefully thumb your nose at prim 'n' proper social decorum stance which is a true hallmark of the uptight system punk rebellion. Punk motto to by: "You ain't shit without a leather jacket!" Great stuff, man.

THE PINETOPS -Above Ground and Vertical (Monolith Record Group, PO Box 990980 Boston, MA 01299-980) A gentle, lulling, folksy and very rootsy alternative country rock jewel, an eminently tuneful and listenable sound that's so sweet and pure that it reaches the lofty level of the truly transcendent. Lead singer/songwriter Jeffrey Dean Foster's hoarse, cracking, Bob

Dylan-esque weathered croak of a voice possesses a certain tattered, yet still sturdy quality that's utterly endearing and totally convincing. Foster wistfully reflects on the assorted ways people do their best to cope with life's endless avalanche of dismaying hardships. The remarkably full and expansive arrangements, vividly filled out with humming bass lines, softly strummed guitars, softly assertive drum beats, and a harmonic deluge of pianos, organs, pedal steel guitar, and a sparsely applied harmonica, ebb and flow with deceptive melodic ease, creating a luminous and impressive sonority that's impossible to dislike. A bright, radiant, illuminating sunshine beam of an album that's completely beguiling and assured.

nihilism that are significant hallmarks of this lousy era. An excellent album.

F.P.TOZ -Dicken's Cider (Hi-Test Records, PO Box 43, Totowa, NJ 07511) Beep! Uu-gah! We stomp 'em real good! Unreconstructed raunched-out caveman rock'n'roll! Elementary musical primitivism for the boorish, unrefined barbarian in all of us! We talkin' ear-shredding vocals right outta the School of Open Up and Holler at the Top of Your Lungs Singing/Shouting! Funkier-than-thou wah-wah wailin' guitars! Roll over dead! boogie-woogie drum beats that storm ahead like a woolly mammoth stampede! Sweep up the floor nasty bass lines! Crude, profane lyrics! Deep, tasty, taffy-thick hard-throbbin', slow-diggin', stretch 'em to the near breaking point brutally sustained grooves! No frills, no bullshit, no pretense

The World According To Wawyrzniak

by joe wawyrzniak



STUDBULL'S DISCO BISQUIT -Return Of The Super Zeros (Sin Klub Entertainment, PO Box 2507 Toledo, OH 43606) Nothing hits the splendidly sordid spot better than a bunch of joyfully raunchy and disgusting funky junky industrial-metal whiteboys oozing a deliciously and decadent reptilian charisma from every greasy, filthy, unwashed pore. The crunchy, menacing, slowly slithering in its own smooth, snaky, sleazy style arrangements cut a formidably soulful groove. Said throbbing bed-rock groove is nicely countered by the obscenely salacious lyrics and the sexually perverse and aberrant subject matter of such choice crudball wonders as "Naughty Closet" and the particularly lubricious "Candyman." Moreover, the band angrily sounds off on the unjustly wretched plight of the average heterosexual Caucasian guy in the multicultural down-with-honky-dudes 90's: "Pressure," "Nosy Parker" and "Biscuit Stomp" are righteously pissed off cries of pure rage that really deliver the lowdown nasty goods. Bonus points for firmly stating that O.J. Simpson killed his wife and for savagely nailing the extreme neurosis and

whatsoever let's go back to the Stone Age rumble grumbling at its raw, basic, deliciously unadorned and unpolished straight-up butt-whippin' best! Great fuckin' album, man!

TRACK ONE AB -Reverie (Royalty Records, 176 Madison Ave. New York, NY 10016) If bright, happy, rhythmically chugin' grooves are a precious commodity, then this divinely funky boppin' Long Island quartet most definitely have staked a monopoly on 'em with their splendidly soulful sophomore album. The tunelessly tooled arrangements sway with serenely relaxed assurance. The quirky lyrics vividly relate compelling everyday life stories with a winning emphasis on minute details and an arrestingly off-beat outside peering in point of view. The coolly-wound melodies hit you like a gentle, yet assertive gust of pure spring air. Fave freaky line: "She gets high when we lick the moon together." Net verdict: Smart, sunny, and appealing, this one sparkles with an irresistibly luminescent blue-eyed soul soaked pop-rock glow.

THE VISITORS -Gone For Days (It's Good I Guess Records, 18311 Arch St. Little Rock, AR 72206) A thrashy, punchy, 5-song pop-rock EP, done with enough wild, flailing berserker energy to make your stereo fly right off the wall. A sweetly bemused attitude and peppy vocals work off the ripping 'hard-riffin' arrangements of chock-a-block with chunky drum beats, grunged-out distorted guitar licks, and rancid spew gurgling bass lines. What the band lacks in finesse and restraint they more than compensate for in sheer punky, play til you pass out vitality and enthusiasm' thus making this dynamic little explosion one damn satisfying blast of thrilling sonic overdrive which revs up and speeds along to overall solid effect.

CHROME LOCUST (Tee Pee/MIA Records, 315 Church Street 2nd Floor New York, NY 10013) Riding on an immense, surging, hard-ripping of pure soul-twisting anger and fury, this powerfully pissed-off hardcore-punk CD explodes off the speakers with heart-stopping rapid-fire speed and go-right-for-the-throat ferocity. The frayed, tattered tonsil, snarling through clenched teeth vocals tear away at the relentlessly bleak subject matter -loneliness, fucked-up asshole best friends, sexual frustration, hopeless drug addiction, that straight-to-the-bone grim stuff-with a terrifying sense of absolute boiling rotgut asperity. The hacksaw guitars, stern, steely drum beats, a remorselessly lingering bass a shockingly swift beeline for your cranium, drilling the savagely gritty melodies firmly into your unsettled mind. This totally up to snuff New York City trio have spat up one hell of a murderously effective bone-shattering album, a profoundly disquieting and fiercely blunt blast of seething, unrestrained brutality that's mighty hard to shake.

THE DILETTANTES (PO Box 474, Raritan NJ 08869) The name suggests a bunch of pitifully inept no-brainer losers who know nothing about good-time, high-rolling, let-it-all-hang-out swingin' and swayin' rock 'n' roll music; the name couldn't be any more misleading. Right from the get-go, with the ebullient opening track, "Really Glad to See Ya," boppin' and hoppin' with infectious glee, this album does its proverbial damndest to effervesce and vivify with consummately smack-bang-on-target enjoyable results. The vocals effortlessly expound on the surefire subject of taking it easy and just plain living life for all its worth with a winning dearth of pretense. The throbbing, firm-bodied guitar riffs are every bit as moist and meaty as big, fat submarine sandwich; ditto the kickin' drums, the blurring Latino horns, soulful harmonica, and sturdy bass lines. The smoothly flowing rhythms, jumpin' swing jazz beats, and general air of all-out kicked-back bliss will have you snapping your fingers and tapping your feet like today's almost over and tomorrow will never come. The operative words for this one are FUN, MORE FUN, and STILL MORE FUN! A top-notch album.

TIDEWATER GRAIN -Tomorrow the World, Today the Rent (Slugfest Records, 726 Llanfair Road, Rydal, PA 19046) Here's a prime recipe for a truly kick-ass album. First, cultivate a toughly resilient, keep yer chin up against all adversity attitude that's thankfully free of either maudlin self-pity or equally mawkish sentiment. Affix said 'tude to a rough, gritty, no-shit sound that does its rugged thing without the faintest trace of hoity-toity fussiness. Keep the arrangements lean, direct, and tautly focused, with grinding guitars, hard-as-concrete drums, and grunged-out bass lines strongly rippin' away at the sinewy, kick up the dirt melodies. Growl all lyrics in finest raw-throated Vail in' from the bottom of the guts fashion. Strip away any needless lofty pretense. Replace that dreaded pretense with a certain admirably frank and uncompromising blurt it out like you see it in plain, no ambiguous beating around the bush terms mentality. Put all together and play it with genuine conviction and no apologizing to anyone for daring to go against the grain. The net result should be one hellaciously cookin', damn excellent album, which this honey most definitely is.

GERTY -Two Kisses in a Row (Plastique Recording Co., P.O. Box 223, Chapel Hill, NC 27514) Exuberantly catchy 'n' kickin' New Wavish pop-rock effervescence, a hugely likable and on the money sophomore follow-up to Gerty's thoroughly delightful debut effort. The

breathy guy-gal vocal harmonies are back in full fun force, ditto the perky, jumpy, tirelessly dynamic arrangements, brightly bubbling melodies, and general air of sweet, spirit-lifting happy-go-lucky cheeriness. Energetic to the point of near-total boisterousness, loaded to the frothy brim with ringing guitars, cutting, spaced-out synth lines, and merrily hoppin' beats, perfectly capped off by the band's less and infectious jollity, this album delivers enough shiny, contented vibes to keep you smiling for at least three weeks.

GLUECIFER -Heald to Head Boredom (Devil Doll Records, P.O. Box 30727 Long Beach, CA 90853) Staple your stereo to the ground prior to blasting this earth-shaking eruption of raw, angry, snarling straight-from-the-depths-of-hell rock 'n' roll fury. Rarely has bone-rattling, mind-bending, knock-you-upside-the-head-with-a-two-by-four punk-ass nasty vitriol and nihilism been presented with such galvanizing speed, force and ferocity. The tonsil-tearing lead vocals shriek over a fiercely blazing onslaught of grinding hacksaw guitars, steam-rolling drum beats, and lacerating bass lines. The scorchingly shit-hot and wholly menacing bedrock grooves are given further muscle by the exceedingly profane lyrics ("Sick of watchin' tv they're always showin' prong/ just wanna sit at home and fiddle with my dong"), an unsparingly belligerent "fuck you" attitude, and the cheerfully gross and offensive subject matter (dope dealing, masturbation, obscene crank callers, etc.). Add a few truly smokin' souped-up hot-rod songs, no pretense or restraint to speak of, and a righteous disdain for sugarcoated commercialized pop pap, and you know you've got a rally kick-ass sleaze-rock album to reckon with, pal.

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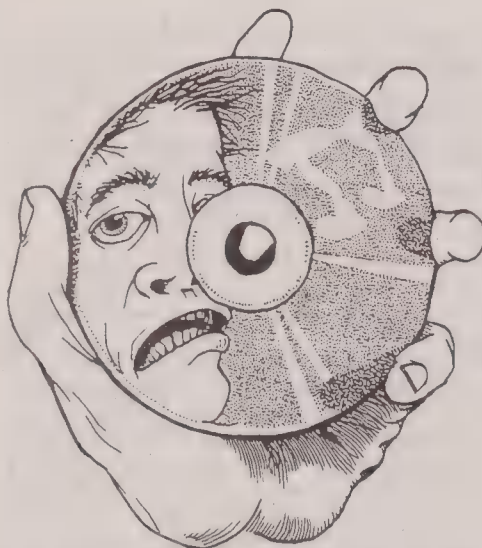
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Record Reviews

■ **MILE PILOT** - *Songs From An Old Town We Once Knew* (Cargo Music, 2002) Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92117-3432 This two-disc compilation collects hard-to-find singles, home recordings and six previously unreleased efforts. ■ would be far too limiting to simply slap ■ pop label upon 3 Mile Pilot. This musically ambiguous outfit conjures up songs of substance while pushing the experimental envelope. Touches of psychedelia mesh with indie rock to create truly original pieces of work. Each track is a haunting, quiet affair as ■ band mixes harmony and various changes in tempos and keys, from the lush "Piano Plus" and "Piano Minus", ■ well ■ the more aggressive and equally haunting "Sewn To Our Side". My personal favorite, "In This Town I Awaken," is ■ lovely soundscape propelled by ethereal vocals and warm, textured playing. Armestad Smith, Paul Jenkins and Tom Zinser create painstakingly ■ songs, dominated by lush experimentation, ■ on the epic "Jadulastan Requiem," a nearly-12 minute experience in heightening your senses through atmospheric beauty. "A Very Old Bass", "This Divine Crown" and "Terry d" ■ all examples of complex and challenging tracks that will excite listeners and alter your opinion of ■ pop music ■ do.-Rich Quinlan

■ - *Kung Pow* (Daemon Records PO Box 1207 Decatur Ga. 30031) ■ delivers retro sounding punk with ■ healthy pop influence similar to Shonen Knife or the 5,6,7,8's. Gritty guitar work from Rob Gal can at times drive the band in rarely explored territory, as 6x blends saucy ■ with abrasive playing. Lara Kiang is the star here, ■ her voice is the driving force behind the band, but only for the first few tracks. There is nothing truly extraordinary about this disc, ■ songs ■ to decrease in fluidity and grit after the fourth or fifth effort. Songs like "Lost Your Chance", "Figure It Out" and "Beat You Up" are tired, recycled songs that lack real originality ■ punch. While 6x show flashes of fun loving punk/pop harmony, they do not sustain this emotion long enough and ultimately, *Kung Pow* ■ not nearly spicy enough.- Rich Quinlan

27 - *Songs From The Edge Of The Wing* (Reproductive Records, P.O. Box 398073, Cambridge MA 02139) A sweet voiced lady and ■ couple of friends recorded these 7 songs in their living room. Six originals and ■ cool cover of Neil Young's "Dangerbird," this release is ■ of those which is easy to slip into a CD player (except my cheap one, which won't play it at all), hit the repeat button, and let 'er go for ■ few hours. It is probably an insult to describe these melodies ■ easy listening; rock opera ■ tad overblown; and they don't fit anywhere else that I ■ think of. What you get is a very eclectic presentation which is, hell, easy to listen to. I listened to ■ for about ■ hours and ■ I didn't get really excited, I do plan to give ■ a bunch more airplay. - Rodney Leighton

44 **LONG** - *Inside The Horse's Head* (Burnside Records, 122 SE 27th Ave, Portland OR 97214) I put this album in the player ■ 2; did ■ housework, had a bath, various other things, and let the good ole rock and roll with country and ■ tinges roll over and around me. Three hours later... I guess I'll shut it ■ for awhile. Until another day. The promo stuff ■ that Brian Berg wrote the 13 originals (dunno who wrote the other one.) Listening to this is like listening ■ a rock radio station in the 70s ...a ballad followed by a C&W tune succeeded by a bluesy number chased by a rocker which segues into a sad lullaby which then jumps into a killer rock and roll humdinger. Punks and metalheads and ■ age geeks will hate this release. This old guy ■ it. - Rodney Leighton

A-SET - *The Science of Living Things* (Tree Records, PO Box 578582, Chicago IL 60657) Moody, minimalist four-track home-recording pop from the mind of Albert Menduno. *The Science of Living Things* ■ six songs of a stylistically challenging, rough around the edges vision. The lush instrumental "Rosebud" opens ■ collection featuring lush keyboards generating an ethereal, atmospheric mood. "W. Division" closes the record, and this song is the ■ straightforward of the bunch, led by Menduno's haunting voice and guitar playing including just ■ hint ■ lap ■ from Tim Hurley, and organ in the background.

A-Set seemed to develop as ■ band ■ the disc progressed; their seemingly easily ■ four track aesthetic does not truly capture their blend of crude finesse and awkward beauty. Well done. - Rich Quinlan

ALEUTIAN - *Frame Dragging* (-esque records POB 770 Durham, NH 03824) As much fun as watching paint dry, but not nearly as raucous. Someone's meds ■ to be re-evaluated ASAP. - Sal Cannestra

ALL CHROME - *Flounders Flyers College and Canada* (Ferret Records, Po Box 4118, Highland Park, NJ 08904) Screaming out of Massachusetts, All Chrome plays speedy, tightly knit hard-core with ■ definite appreciation of simpler, 80's flavored styles. There is no metal influence here, just straight ■ guitar playing from Corey Jones and the high speed vocal power of Martin Johnson. The ■ pounds ■ way through two opening tracks before findings ■ groove on "Tall Man," an assault from all angles, led by the intricate trade offs between bassist Jason Amaral and drummer Erik Petersen. This kind of playing becomes ■ staple for All Chrome, ■ they produce ■ dazzling display of musical prowess. "Manhead," "The Marching Man" and the finale, "Cap Log" are powerful displays of sweaty, passionate hard-core. All Chrome is ■ tremendously aggressive band that can mix power, speed and skill into one very impressive package.-Rich Quinlan

ANTHROPHOBIA - ■ *The Zero To ■ Movement* (215 Records, PO Box 34512, Philadelphia PA 19101) It's clobbering time. Anthrophobia, Reading PA's ■ to progressive power metal, is back with ■ slammin' new disc, a ■ lineup (natch), and more of those fierce Frank Phobia vocals. This time around, Frank channels his frustration over the innumerable setbacks ■ band has faced into the power "Gathering Dust," sings the praises of teen diva Christina Ricci ■ ■ lustful "Ricci," and unleashes several ■ Phobia classics, including ■ brutal yet catchy "Mercury" and "Blindsided." Lead guitarist Dave (Lord) Phobia ■ some amazingly innovative sounds here, which coupled with the band's bludgeoning rhythm section and Frank's battering vocals. If you like it heavy and hard but still dig rock ■ makes you think, you can't do any better. - Jim Testa

ANTI-FLAG - *A New Kind Of Army* (Go Kart Records, P.O. Box 20, Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012) Anti-Flag ■ back with their second full length ■ are rockin' harder than ■ 15 pure punk anthems that'll get you wonderin' where these fellas have been all your life, or if you're like me, you'll be asking how do they keep getting better and better? Punk ■ fuck but still melodic, ■ there a better combo than that? Now, let me play the dick for a minute, it says in the bio about how Anti-flag are all anti-war and corporate Amerikkka but then all the bio talks about is how many albums they've sold and shit ■ that. Anyway, buy this fucking album, you won't regret it! Check 'em out live too! - Conor Moore

ASSMEN - ■ *Nation* (Dirty Records, PO ■ 6869, Glendale, AZ 85312-6869) With ■ style reminiscent of early '80s hardcore punk, the Assmen dish out 11 aggressive, raunchy punk'n'roll tunes. These guys remind me of Fear, with stupid offensive lyrics worthy of ■ Dwarves or the Meatmen. Excellent jarring chord progressions and yelled vocals on the likes of "Beer is Good Food", "Living in the Car", "Latrine Duty", and "Burgerbreath" really take you back to the chaotic, thriving early-80's SoCal punk scene. - Mike Ramek

ATOMSMASHER - *Up and Atom* (Rock Room Records, 32 Rolling Hills Lane, Harrison NY 10525) I got way too excited when I ■ this CD because I thought it ■ side project from Atom (of Atom & His Package.) ■ such luck though. It's like a ■ between 311, some cheesy 70's band, and Pink Floyd. - Eva Silverman

BABY DROWSY - *The Early Years* (Thrashpup Records, 119 Washington ■ ■ #3, Hoboken NJ 07030) Catchy, bouncy, innocent ■ Wave pop is the order of

the day from **It's** long-lived (but low-profile) Hoboken combo. Andrea Harbison's hearty but light-hearted vocals lead the way **in** the Drowsy's **album** a little B 52's, **a** lot of early Blondie, lots of frugadelic **and** plenty of singalong melodies. It's a **lot** of fun but fairly predictable until the album closing "Vestal Sunoco," when **the** band cranks it up for some buzzsaw **in** Ray Spex-ish punk. - Jim Testa

TAL BACHMAN (Columbia). Super **album** release from **a** Canadian lad. A dozen top notch pop tunes from this one-man operation. Tal wrote the songs, helped produce the album with **the** Rock, did lead and backing vocals and played **the** guitars and piano. The guy **is** something like Elton John except he sounds better. I liked the first two tracks **the** best, which is something out of the ordinary. "Darker Side of Blue" is an excellent pop rock ode to love and despair. "She's So High" is a great power pop paean to **a** lady which almost makes one believe in adulation. Kind of reminds **me** of East River Pipe. Great album. Go buy one. - Rodney Leighton



Anthrophobia

Photo by Jim Testa

BADTOWN BOYS - *Another Fine Day* (New Red Archives, PO Box 210501, San Francisco, CA 94121) A perfect blend of old-school hardcore and straightforward melodic punk from these SoCal veterans seamlessly **form** a truly accomplished album, worthy of much acclaim. The decay of society, punk rock nostalgia, betrayal, unemployment, and despair are all topics addressed in **the** dense lyrical content. Like West Coast contemporaries Good Riddance, The Badtown Boys' style **is** between breakneck shout-along early '80s-style intensity, and fast-paced, hook filled energy **in** this release. Great guitar work, and powerful vocals sung with clarity and conviction showcase the many powerful stylistic facets of this incredible band. - **Jim Testa**

AL BASILE - *Down **in** Providence Plantation* (Sweetspot Records Po Box 4723 Rumford, RI 02916) *Down **in** Providence Plantation* **is** a high class, smooth-sounding collection of jazzy, blues-influenced R&B brought to you compliments of Al Basile, a Providence schoolteacher and trumpet player who began his career **as** a member of the legendary touring machine Roomful of Blues in the early 70's. Basile has maintained **a** friendship with the highly skilled Duke Robillard, and Robillard and **the** band act as backing musicians for this disc. Each track is a highly articulated, emotional effort, highlighted by Duke's lush guitar playing and Basile's surprisingly steady voice. The bouncy, Dave Limina keyboard laden "Don't Start Something" and the equally uptempo "When I Reach My Limit" **are** examples of **a** performer who realizes that he is not **a** classic crooner, yet **he** manipulate his voice with great effectiveness. The more reserved "Bite Your

Tongue" and "Things Aren't Going So Well" are rich, **in** sounding tracks in which Basile's deep tone adds **in** clarity **to** **the** of each failed relationship being described. In **addition** **to** Robillard's stella guitar playing and Basile's introspective phrasing, you cannot but notice the skills of drummer Marty Richards and bassist Marty Ballou, the other two-thirds of Robillard's **band**. This may have been a long **awaited** debut for Basile, but *Down on Providence Plantation* **is** a culmination of years of hard work, and is definitely worth checking out. - Rich Quinlan

BASTARDS OF MELODY - *Keep **in** Down!* (Paul Crane, 31 Griffith Street, Jersey City NJ 07307) Jersey City's **Bastards of Melody** specialize in jangly, catchy power-pop influenced by **the** icons **like** **the** Beatles, Hollies, and Byrds. Guitarist Paul Crane's easygoing, boy-next-door vocals evoke Fountain of Wayne's sense of pop whimsy on **the** wittily self-deprecating "Must **be** Stoned." He gets a bit more gritty on the faster-paced "Dead Soldiers," and **the** band gets eight miles high for the psychedelized freakout "Born To Raise Hell." - Jim Testa

BENT LEG FATIMA (File 13 Records, PO Box 2302, Philadelphia PA 19103) Bent Leg Fatima play **a** unique head-expanding space-rock style reminiscent of acts like The Degaboh System and Asteroid 4. Using this as a base, the band **take** the listener **on** **numerous** musical journeys, most of which are void of vocals. There are elements of Sixties psychedelia as well **as** jazzy segments accented with a hint of **the** blues. There is **a** series of three songs here - "Sixteen", "A Sort of Seamless Suite" and "Hemingway" - **that** held me captivated and amazed with their display of musical innovation. I **was** also struck by the band's willingness to diversify their approach on each song, generating numerous musical paths within each song. This is wild and impressive. - Rich Quinlan

JELLO BIAFRA - *If Evolution **is** Outlawed, Only Outlaws Will Evolve* (Alternative Tentacles) The problem with Jello Biafra **is** that he's too annoying for the people who need to hear what **he** **has** to say to listen. It's sort of like the Tie Complex: if you're not wearing one, most people who are wearing one aren't going to respect what you're saying. It's probably **not** to say that Biafra has **the** respect of millions (if that's **a** high guess, give him time), but few of Biafra's followers have **the** respect of the status quo, of the people who need to listen. In effect, it's knowing someone's about to hit you but not honking. Or, perhaps more accurate to the analogy, honking when the other person's deaf. Enter *If Evolution is Outlawed, Only Outlaws Will Evolve*. Biafra **is** smart -- **we** already know that. What this three-disc release brings to the **table** (other than **a** lot of spoken word) **is** Biafra with a louder horn **and** free hearing aids for everyone. The man **is** a professional. These are live recordings and often flawless. His delivery should be the envy of any aspiring spoken word artist. What makes this latest release **so** good **is** **a** extra dimension of maturity. Facts and figures are cited and shock techniques are traded for intelligent syllogism. This is an obvious for any **die-hard**, but also highly recommended for those ready to give Jello a second chance. - David Michael McNamara

BILLY CLUB - "Serve Loud" EP (Coldfront Records) Ex-members of Discharge, UK Subs, Exploited and the original REO Speedboller singer make up this classic salute to Brit Punk. White trash working class punk that rallies against the rich and police brutality while singing about going nowhere, idiots and those who seek chemical **reality** to reality. - Tom Brebric

BIRDY - *Supernominal Paraphemalia* (Cropduster Records, **11** Trask Avenue, Bayonne NJ 07002) This five piece act creates guitar based pop with lush female vocals and radio-ready hooks. "High **in** the Sun," "My Brave Face" and "In My Dreams" have the potential to make a star of vocalist Stephanie Seymour as she carries each of the nine tracks. While the former Aquanettas drummer is featured here, she **is** surrounded by all too generic playing. The band **attempts** **a** country vein on "You Used To Shine" and "One Pretty Mess," two songs that attempt to display **a** different **side** of the band but fall flat. The band sounds **like** if they are holding back until the concluding "Perfect Hand," **a** speedy, powerful, rollicking track that gives guitarists Chris Merola and Sean Seymour an opportunity to shine. Unfortunately, **the** moment of passionate playing is the only true bright spot here. Birdy may be interested in playing catchy pop, but the tracks **in** *Supernominal Paraphemalia* lack **a** solid backbone or innovative ideas. Rehashing old pop styles does not make for an exciting record. - Rich Quinlan

FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS - *Pistolero* (spinART, POB 1798 New York, NY 10156-1798) Black **is** back with his second full length in **11** months(!) for spinART. Like the last album, *Pistolero* was recorded live to two-track, but it is anything but lo-fi. This is muscular, hard driving rock 'n' roll with just enough of the 'space alien just visiting our planet' quirkiness that has become his trademark. Consider this the second half of **a** remarkable double CD and thank your respective god(s) that Frank Black is back and **we** had the **chance** to give him another chance. - Sal Cannestra

THE BLACK HEART PROCESSION - 2 (Touch **in** Go) This offshoot of 3 Mile Pilot is a mysterious and richly moving blend of minimalist playing, heart wrenching lyrics, and luminescent, stirring soundscapes. Created by **the** Mile Pilot's Toby Nathaniel and Pall Jenkins, Black Heart Procession features sparse, haunting melodies that waft through the air with fluidity and **a** poignant **quality**. The majority of the tracks here feature only the two men exploring their experimental side, with Jenkins and Nathaniel playing everything from guitars and Moog synthesizers to sheet metal and something called a "waterphone." This instru-

with images of suffering and sadness. The lush piano of "Gently Off The Edge" and "Outside Glass" creates a stirring backdrop for Jenkins' of heart-break and dark, all encompassing loneliness. I found myself enraptured with this release and I was pleasantly surprised, for this is not usually my first choice of musical pace. However, the play is exquisite and the brutally honest lyrics too much to resist. This disc worth taking a chance. - Rich Quinlan

BLINK-182 - *Enema Of The State* (MCA) Ok, we all know Blink-182 and you either love 'em or hate 'em. I personally love 'em. 12 more super melodic pop punk songs with very cool back up vocals and all that cool stuff like muted single string guitar solos. Lyrically, they are sometimes funny, sometimes a bit emo, but always rockin'. If you like this band you already got this, if you don't like 'em I could be on for days and you probably still wouldn't like 'em so fuck it, I'm out! - Conor Moore

THE BOLLWEEVILS - *History of the Bollweevils, Part II* (Dr. Strange Records, PO Box 7000-117, Alta Loma, CA 91701) Topnotch Chicago pop-punk. That's it's heavier on the punk than the pop and features extra-beefy guitar. This collects lots of miscellaneous Bollweevils tracks from split singles and comps, along with previously unreleased tracks. There are some excellent tunes here, such as the Freeze's "Trouble if You Hide" from a split 10" the Bollweevils did with the Freeze, and a cool rendition of Naked Raygun's "Roller Queen" from a 7" comp that rivals the original. If you are a fan of the Weevils, then you'll want this. If you've never heard of them (you live under a rock?) but like really good punk music, then this is a must have. - Paul Silver

THE BOOM - *Any Day Of The Night* (Slowdime, P.O. Box 414 Arlington, VA 22210) The Boom are a DC group of gentlemen who play a groovin' mix of soul, go-go, jazz and funk. The Boom contain ex-members of Hoover, bass guy Fred (now in June of 44,) and Chris (who is in Sea Tiger.) The music, which you could imagine, is rhythmically in nature and may even make you want to shake your rump. Growing up in Baltimore as a teenager I found this interesting DC band. One Word and Soup who had a similar flavor. DC is known for their Go-Go music, remember EU and Trouble Funk? It's nice to see that there is still some soul left in DC and *Any Day Of The Night* is clear evidence of that. - Howie K.

BORIS THE SPRINKLER - *Suck* (Go-Kart Records, POB 20 Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012) Norb & Crue are back with another record. At times it sounds just like their previous one, *Mega Anal*, but there is enough fun and surprises to make this every bit as worthwhile. Just when I think I've graduated from this kind of stuff, I hear a record like this that makes me realize pop-punk is the word of the Lord. Fifteen (almost 16) songs, including a couple previously available on 7 inches. - Matt Leines

Haw! It's those wacky Wisconsinites back to deliver another assault of low-brow, high-pitched, verbose rock n' roll to the masses. While slowly moving away from their pop-punk roots into garage rock, they haven't sacrificed their three chord, anti-p.o. anthems which have won them fans the world over. With songs like, "Statutory Rock", "Baby I Got Gas" and the amazing "U.F.O." ,Narb and the boys are constantly pushing the boundaries of punk rock and the english language into scary, untreaded territory that most bands fear to go. The geeks shall prevail! -Oliver Lyons

BOSS GETTYS - *Tigrebeat* (Childlike Records, 409 Washington St. #461, Hoboken NJ 07030) Anyone who's ever hung around a high-school metal will savor the delicious self-deprecating humor hidden within "Johnny's Double Kick Drum," the leadoff track from the Boss Jim Getty's 2-CD album. The song celebrates the joy that can only be experienced by making a really loud racket in your very first band, with the punishing intensity that the Boss Jims bring to any song they touch. When singer/guitarist Mark Segal snarls "Let's rock!" and bassist Stein and drummer Austin Faxon kick into the chorus, it's about as gratifying as gut-punch you're gonna get these days from a rock 'n' roll band. That's only half the story: Yes, the Boss Jims rock. And because they rock so persuasively, it's easy to overlook all the other things they do - the frenetic time changes, the stop-and-go transitions, Stein's nimble bass runs and emphatic backup vocals, Faxon's impeccably steady backbeats, and Segal's array of sonic guitar sounds and rapid-fire metal leads. The Boss Jim Gettys aren't just a rock 'n' roll band; they're a force of nature. Get ready to get blown away. - Jim Testa

BOTANICA - *Botanica* (Checkered Past Records, 1456 North Dayton, Suite 205, Chicago, IL 60622) Oooh, this is a really tough call. On the one hand this has many of the elements of slick, commercial pop music, which turns me off. On the other hand, it's got some really cool exotic world-music influences and some retro psych influence in it, too, which I really like. "And Then I Met Her" is nice, jazzy lounge tune. And on several of the songs, particularly "Simple Life," I feel like I'm listening to Lou Reed. "The 14th Song," the album closer (not including the bonus remix of the title track done by contributor Daniel Ash of Love and Rockets) is a nice instrumental loaded with counterpoint. I think a number of the tracks will grow on me, though some of them I will be able to stomach. - Paul Silver

BOUNCING SOULS - *Hopeless Romantic* (Epitaph Records) With their full-bodied, infectious punk rock flavor very much intact, the Bouncing Souls embark on their fourth, and quite possibly best, release. As always, much of their material has many pitfalls - loneliness, the dreariness of day-to-day

existence, bad relationships, etc., - but puts a humorous spin on these things with ironic and heartfelt lyrics, incredibly catchy guitar parts, and sing-along choruses. Songs of unity and friendship are present here, too. While a more filtered-sounding pop gloss has been added to the comparatively punk sound on their previous three releases, the Souls have not sacrificed one iota of sincerity or integrity on *Hopeless Romantic*, but rather, have elaborated on their very singular style to yield a slew of incredible, energetic songs. From the nostalgic "87" to the downright silly catchiness of "Bullying the Jukebox" and "Ole" (!), to the anthemic "Fight To Live" and the humorously tragic "Monday Morning Ant Brigade," the tracks are all unique and memorable, and complement each other perfectly to produce another thoroughly enjoyable album from these guys. - Mike Ramek

BOYSETSFIRE - *In Chrysalis* (Initial Records, POB 17131, Louisville, KY 40217) Five hardcore punk tunes which are very loud, melodic, and just plain good. "Voiceover" is insane and a great opener. "Loser Of The Year" is a slower hardcore tune, but still drives into your head. The disc concludes with a good cover of The Kennedy's "Holiday in Cambodia." - Denis Sheehan

MIA BOYLE - *I Am A Diver* (Kitchen Whore Records, 460 South Eleventh St., San Jose CA. 95112) This is primarily one gal named Ann Marie Boyle, who to enjoy her work albeit sounding though the lyrics are being dragged out of her very soul. The only description which comes to me is spoken word material set to music and sung... sorta. Her voice is unique in my experience. There's an odd quality to it, sort of like one of those old 78 records being played on a third. - Rodney Leighton

BUCKWILD - *Full Overdrive* (Lobster Records P.O. BOX 1473 Santa Barbara, CA 93102) Crunchy, metallic, hyperactive NOFX-style guitar riffing with very subdued vocals and pop hooks galore accurately describes this band, led by ex-Lagwagon guitarist Shawn Dewey. Despite their innate catchiness, Buckwild's many upbeat numbers on this record just didn't grab me. Their sound is somewhat dull and the vocals removed and not incredibly enthusiastic. Granted, the straight ahead punk rock of "The Goodland", and the unique guitar hooks of "Where Are We" prove pretty satisfying, but unfortunately tracks like these are few and far between on this album. - Mike Ramek

BURIED ALIVE - *Of Your Perfect World* (Victory Records, 1837 W. Fulton, Chicago, IL 60612) Twelve unbelievably fast speedcore songs to wake your tired butt up, intense with a brutal edge. The lead singer screams his lyrics into your head as the band pounds away on the instruments. Insane stuff here. - Denis Sheehan

BURNING AIRLINES - *Mission: Control!* (DeSoto Records, PO Box 60335, Washington, D.C. 20039) Another tour de force from former Jawbox and/or GI musicians J Robbins, Bill Barbot, and Peter Moffett. Though comparisons to Jawbox are inevitable, it would be a mistake to leave it at that. As great as the Jawbox songs were, Burning Airlines' songs are a bit more. More raucous, more angular, more introspective. "Crowned" reminds me of an updating of the Bill Nelson early-80s new-wave guitar sound a bit. "Scissoring" is another standout track (one that appeared on a previous single). There's much good here that's hard to put into words that I insist you get your own copy of and try and put it into words yourself. - Paul Silver

BURNING UP WHITE (P.O. Box 26, Somerville NJ 08876) This Jersey trio delivers two songs of pure power pop with dazzling lyrics and stylish playing. The band is led by the lovely singing of bassist Mary Ann Wilson. Her angelic voice carries both tracks, but she particularly shines on "William," a pleasant, smoothly flowing song that harkens back to the origins of indie pop sweetness. Not to be forgotten, drummer Scott Wilson and guitarist Damian Gonzalez are two highly skilled players who dictate the pace of each effort. Both "William" and "Movie" are mid tempo songs that show brief flashes of powerful energy before retreating back to a more soft-spoken manner. There is something haunting and unforgettable about this band, for I feel that Burning Up White has the potential to truly explode, as Wilson's voice seems to hover on the line between exorcising demons and remaining sweetly subdued. This is wonderfully entertaining and just a lot of fun to listen to. I want to hear more from this band. - Rich Quinlan

BUSDRIVER (GeV Records, PO Box 1263, Palo Alto CA 94302) This trio plays bass-heavy rock that is occasionally thunderous, but more often predictable. "Care of Less Hobby" is a solid introduction, with lyrics like, "We get so sarcastic when we get high." Unfortunately, each of the other songs follows a typical pattern, particularly "Get Some Ready," "What I Said Head" and "Point Reyes." These three efforts all sound like a garage band trying their hardest to capture a vintage Nirvana feel, mixing thick bass and start/stop drumming below a mellow rhythm guitar. The vocals barely exceed a groan or growl without displaying much of a range. The band redeems themselves slightly on "Late Ass Train", but overall, this is a disappointment. - Rich Quinlan

BUZZ PROPHETS - *Kentucky* (Tender Stone Ent., 84 Route 303, Suite 137, Tappan NY 10983) Buzz Prophets rock with a grunge flavor, mixed with heavy blues feel to it. Vocals sound a lot like Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam. The faster songs were actually very enjoyable, but the all too many slower ones were a bore. Reminded me a lot of The Hothouse Flowers from the late 80s. - Denis Sheehan

CAMBER - Anyway, I've Been There (Deep Elm Records, PO BOX 1965, New York, NY 10156) Moody ~~emo~~ rock, full of layers of discordant melody played at ~~a~~ varied pace, sound effects, and vocals that range from muttered to moaned, creating a huge wall of echoing sorrowful sound. Kind of irritating in large doses. - Mike Ramek

CANDY SNATCHERS - Human Zoo (Go Kart) The guy singing sounds really angry, maybe too angry, ~~and~~ a bit like Jello Biafra. The Jello part ~~is~~ good, but the rest of it I'll pass on. Eva Silverman

JOE CANZANO & THE RHYTHMIC REVOLUTION - Guitars, ~~and~~ Candy Bars (Rocket Bomb Records, POB 70, So. River, NJ 08882) This ~~is~~ room poet ~~and~~ a refreshing change of pace - uptempo, guitar strummin' rock and folk that you can't help but tap your feet to. Joe ~~is~~ obviously ~~in~~ with relationship troubles whose ~~use~~ of humor and irony all mesh to create well crafted songs. The band's use of congas, tambourines and lap steel all add to the eclectic feel. - Tom Brebric

CARTER PEACE MISSION - Disco Stu Likes Disco Music (Mutant Pop) This ~~is~~ re-release of these San Diego pop-punksters seminal ~~album~~. Upbeat, occasionally catchy melodic pop-punk that falls more into the vein of MXPX than Screeching Weasel. Nothing that you couldn't find anywhere else but, given the age of these kids, this ~~is~~ ~~off~~ closer ~~to~~ my heart than half the NOFX clones out there. - Oliver Lyons

CATHOLIC GIRLS (Renaissance Records, PO Box 684786, Franklin, TN 37068) Back in 1982, long before Britny Spears learned how to pout, the Catholic Girls created quite a stir here in the Northeast. Their stage shows, major label album, and video (MTV ~~was~~ just getting started) got them noticed, with their Catholic school uniforms and power pop songs about betrayal ("Where did I go Wrong"), repression ("Private School") and boyfriends ("Boys Can Cry.") Now after 12 years apart, three ~~of~~ original band members - Roxy Anderson, Kyd Ellsworth, and Gail Peterson - have re-released their original album and add ~~new~~ songs. The ~~new~~ material reflects the band's growth, with songs about politics ("Don't Go to War") and Russia ("Back in Russia") among others. Gail's vocals ~~are~~ still strong, and the band is ~~still~~ doing what they do best. - Phil Rainone

CHEVELLE - Point ~~Blank~~ (Squint Entertainment, 1401 Chestnut Ave., Manhattan Beach CA 90266) ~~Albini~~ Albini has done it again. Throughout his career ~~as~~ producer, Albini has always maintained an uncanny skill for generating loud, powerful records that also possess a ~~human~~ human quality about them. Chevelle ~~is~~ his ~~act~~ act of genius. Chevelle is composed of brothers Pete, Joe and Sam Loeffler, ~~and~~ are a tightly knit, furiously intense band that utilize their brute force with flair ~~and~~ style. Each of the eleven tracks on *Point ~~Blank~~* are pounding, forceful ~~and~~ that reminded ~~me~~ of Helmet or Guzzard ~~and~~ their ~~sound~~. However, this ~~is~~ not just ~~a~~ heavy record. Instead, songs ~~like~~ "Open," the emotionally ~~raw~~ "Prove to You," "Skeptic" and "Peer" ~~are~~ tracks ~~that~~ feature Pete's emotionally revealing lyrics and gruff, powerful voice wrapped around the driving rhythms created by his two siblings on drums (Sam) and ~~guitar~~ (Joe). This is ~~a~~ pleasure from start to finish, for it ~~is~~ so great to ~~hear~~ a young ~~band~~ playing straight forward loud rock without trying to integrate two ~~or~~ other genres into their sound. Chevelle plays old fashioned stomping rock ~~and~~ demands to be played loud. *Point ~~Blank~~* is going to be in my stereo for ~~a~~ long time to come. Their sound is refreshing and their playing is impressive. ~~Go~~ out and discover this disc ~~now~~ before all of your ~~beat~~ beat you to ~~it~~ - Rich Quinlan

THE CHICKEN ~~HAWK~~ - Slouxcide City (RAFR Records, 11054 Ventura Blvd. #205, Studio City, CA 91604) From ~~the~~ opening number "Stick ~~in~~," the Chicken Hawks ~~are~~ prisoners! Here's some of the best trashy and lustful rock ~~to~~ roll around. The vocals ~~and~~ guitar (Betsy Phillips and Pete Phillips respectively), are loud and fast. On songs like "Foghorn's Blues" and "High Profile," The Chicken Hawks bring out the energy and attitude of bands like ~~the~~ Cramps & New York Dolls. On "Heart Throb Man," the band sounds as tight ~~as~~ Joan Jett ~~and~~ the Blackhearts (a fierce blast of rock ~~to~~ roll)! Hot Rod Tod (drums), and the luscious Tammy Gunn (bass) lure you into the songs with a deep, down-and-dirty ~~sound~~. From what I can tell here, their live show will take the music to another level! - Phil Rainone

CHISEL DRILL HAMMER (Hefty Records, 1658 ~~W~~ Ave., Suite 287, Chicago, IL 60647) Another of the many instrumental-only bands that are popping up all over ~~the~~ days, especially in the Chicago ~~area~~. Kind ~~of~~ smooth and laid-back, kind ~~of~~ jazzy-emo, kind of rockier Tortoise, kinda like an instrumental C-Clamp, ~~and~~ of like Illum, etc. Nice, but no great shakes; been there, done that. - Paul Silver

CHOCOLATE ~~BOX~~ - One Thru Twelve (3833 Roswell Rd, Suite 104, Atlanta, GA 30342) Twelve pretty-good "college" rock tunes reminiscent of XTC (minus the quirky sound). Although the songs ~~are~~ enjoyable, they all sound too much alike. The guitar doesn't ~~seem~~ to sway away from the ~~emo~~ sound. - Denis Sheehan

CHOKING VICTIM - No Gods/No Managers (Hellcat 2798 Sunset Blvd. LA CA 90026) Huh, huh...yes! Finally I get my hands on ~~the~~ Choking Victim. See here's the thing, they define their sound as "crack rock steady." Cool, ey? In fact, this stuff is very cool. Sure, ~~and~~ ~~the~~ the things they say might be cheesy, but

they express ~~some~~ thoughts about money, the government, reality and being ~~a~~ fucking punk. This album is split between the heavy "crack steady" beats and the ultra hardcore. The ultra hardcore/screaming is a bit too much for me.... but this album is still quality. - Eva Silverman

CHRISTAL METHODISTS - Satanic Ritual Abuse (Kolazhnikov, Kolazhnikov Tower, Room 1101, 1122 E. Pike St., Seattle, WA 98122-3934) Recordings taken from far-right Christian radio shows over electronic beats make up the bulk of this CD. The recordings are often edited to put really evil words into the mouths of the speakers, such as on the excellent "The Goys of Sex." Other tracks ~~seem~~ to be fairly unedited call-ins, sometimes prank calls, which show the hypocrisy of the radio evangelists. "Raped, Can I Get a Witness" and "Glory in the Flesh" make very effective use of beats. Additionally, there's an excellent, eerie cover of Crass' "Reality Asylum." Some of the tracks are pretty funny, ~~and~~ a bit scary, and some fall kind of flat. Overall, ~~a~~ pretty good ~~album~~ in small doses. Don't try to listen to the whole thing in one sitting, though. - Paul Silver

THE CHUBBIES - My Favorite Everything (Sympathy for the Record Industry, 4450 Calif. Place #303, Long Beach, CA 90807) The Chubbies ~~are~~ Jeannette (guitars/vocals) and Christene (drums/vocals), and they definitely aren't chubby! What they ~~are~~ is a punk/pop band that creates catchy, irresistible power-pop songs. What sets them apart are ~~the~~ urgency and fun that come from their music. The CD features songs about sex, boys, and girls ("When I ~~was~~ Your Girlfriend," "Your Favorite Everything") that are honest and unafraid to poke fun ~~at~~ themselves. On "Suburban Rock Dolls," they combine ~~the~~ 60's girl group sound with the intensity of Joan Jett ~~and~~ the Blackhearts. For ~~a~~ piece band, they ~~are~~ ~~a~~ lot of energy. It'd be interesting to see their live show! - Phil Rainone

CIGAR STORE INDIANS - El Baile ~~de~~ la Cobra (Down South Records, P.O. Box 17737, Raleigh, NC 27619) This ~~is~~ one of the coolest swing discs around! The Cigar Store Indians sound like they picked up where Rockpile (Dave Edmunds, Nick Lowe and co.), left off, with fourteen (plus 2 stripped-down acoustic versions) of the best rockabilly/swing since BR5-49. The music ~~comes~~ from cool rockin' tunes ("Tossin' and Turnin'," "Yipin'," and "Little Things"), ~~and~~ passionate and scornful "Heaven." The title track is ~~a~~ Spanish-flavored instrumental, ~~and~~ would make Dick Dale smile. Any of the band's songs are guaranteed to get ya out on the dance floor. This ~~album~~ is really gone! - Phil Rainone

CIGARETTEMAN / DISCOUNT Split 7-inch (Suburban Home Records 1750 30th St. #365, Boulder CO 80301) Despite the slightly accented lyrical touch of Cigaretteman's vocalist (being Japanese), they and Discount share remarkable similarities in both sound and style. Both bands wade through two tracks of slow, melodic, full-bodied pop/punk rock that is pretty enjoyable but by no ~~means~~ groundbreaking or especially unique. After ~~a~~ couple listenings I grew tired of this one. - Mike Ramek

PAUL CLEMENTS (P.O. Box 332, New York, N.Y. 10011) Song ~~is~~ ~~it~~ "Radio Rodney." How ~~can~~ I not like this? Well, although it's good for what ~~it~~ is, three plays will do me. Clements moved from his native England to NY ~~a~~ number of years ago. Some of the 16 originals on ~~this~~ release sound ~~like~~ Irish ~~shanties~~ shanties. Some ~~are~~ pure folk tunes. A few ~~are~~ children's songs. Totally acoustic, ~~and~~ great guitar work, most of this CD reminds ~~me~~ of Shari Lewis and other such performers who try to entertain children. The guy's in coffeehouses and theaters all over NYC all the time. Check him out if you like this type of stuff. - RodneyLeighton

CLETUS - Horseplay Leads To Tragedy (Johanns Face, PO Box 479164, Chicago IL 60647) Cletus' lead singer Johnny Puke (and yes, ~~he~~ is an old pal of mine) once told me that good pop/punk depends on the guitars, and this album proves him right. This will ~~be~~ the Album of the Year for pop/punk fans who couldn't get into Screeching Weasel's *Emo*. It's all here, from Johnny's exuberantly snotty vocals to guitarist Muf's rampaging singalong riffs, to lyrics ~~that~~ gleam like Shirley Temple's front teeth with humor, sass, and attitude. Put this on and you'll feel happy - and that's no small accomplishment, given the travails, disappointments, and tragedy (including the suicide of original guitarist Kevin Lewey several years ago) that have dogged this band. In the ten years I've known Johnny, he's been a rapper, an actor, a poet, a junkie, and a lead singer, and he was damn good at being every one of them, but nothing he's done ~~since~~ comes close to Cletus. Yee haw, y'all, and get ready to rock 'n' roll. - Jim Testa

COLLEEN COADIC AND THE NEXT TWELVE (PO Box 190516, Anchorage AK 99519) Jersey Beat sent me this CD to review because the presskit compared Colleen Coadic ~~to~~ Ani DiFranco. I think I'm getting tired of people comparing any female singer that plays ~~an~~ acoustic guitar to Ani. It's like saying that there are ~~few~~ few women making music out there, that we must point to the closest "rock star" and dish out labels to other female singers who do not sound like that person. If ~~a~~ female musician sounds slightly aggressive, ~~she~~ is grouped with Ani. If anything, I would say Colleen Coadic is ~~a~~ lot more mellow and relaxed. I would however compare her to any assortment of "alternative" singers ~~on~~ mainstream radio. This material isn't groundbreaking, it's third-layer, recycled, with a ~~few~~ voice. ~~It~~ also ~~is~~ ~~a~~ funky. -Eva Silverman

COALESCE - There is Nothing New Under the Sun (Hydrahead, POB 990248 Boston, MA 02199) Led Zeppelin's heaviness has always been wildly exaggerated. They were always more concerned with melody and texture than any of

their heavy metal contemporaries. Furthermore, Plant's quivering falsetto always ensured that didn't get lost in the mire no matter how many things got. For the first 5 of the 7 Zep songs on this EP, Coalesce seems to not get lost at all. These songs by the numbers versions of Zep staples with whatever subtlety there is in the originals thrown out in the window in favor of jackhammer rhythms and 'bogey-man' vocals. The last 2 ("That's the Way" and "Thank You") are just as unoriginal in their rethinking, but at least Coalesce shows some balls by just playing them straight without the Neanderthal vocals. Overall, you are far better off with the originals your friends can use a laugh at your next pot party. - Sal Cannestra

COMMON RIDER - Last Wave Rockers (Panic Button, PO Box 148010, Chicago, IL 60614-8010) Remember Operation Ivy? Yes, of course, we all do. Ok, so when they broke up, the guys went on to form Rancid but whatever happened to the singer?, you might be asking. Well, he's back after a year break from the music world with his new band, Common Rider. Jesse has still got the amazing lyrics but this time with a lot more of a traditional ska feel rather than the punk ska of Op Ivy. If you ever heard Ben Weasel (owner of Panic Button) go on and on about this album, you were probably expecting the world and were disappointed. Here's a tip, Ben - just say it's Jesse from Op Ivy and the public build up the hype, all right, buddy? Now you're probably thinking I don't like this album, but I do, a lot. Op Ivy fans WILL like this so go buy it already! - Conor Mullen

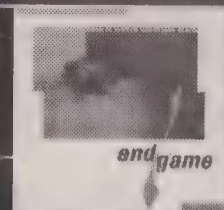
Operation Ivy this isn't. Smooth, melodic, and generally mellow oldschool reggae comprises the bulk of the offering in ten tracks from an incredibly talented ex-Op Ivy vocalist/lyricist Jesse Michaels, backed by members of the Screeching Weasel entourage, drummer Dan Lumley, and bassist Mike Giorgini. Those fervently anticipating some sort of new chapter in the East Bay saga of Michaels' previous incarnation may well be sorely disappointed by this record's musical simplicity, and sense of calm. In place of the previous poetically scathing social critique Op Ivy became famous for, Michaels' lyrical content here seems warm, and nostalgic. Always, it is clear that Michaels knows how to write some damn good tunes, though, and the seamless (albeit toned down) vocal and musical grooves showcase some textured, melodic and lyrical acrobatics to go along to. Fusing reggae sensibilities with punk trimmings, some roots rock flavor, and even a little hip-hop, Common Rider proves to be a fresh, enjoyable start for all parties involved. -Mike Ramek

CONNIE DUNGS - Earthbound For The Holiday (Mutant Pop) Well, look who's all grown up! The Connie Dungs finally came into their own with this release, maintaining their status as one of the top pop-punk bands of the late 90's. With this album the band takes a departure from the usual songs about girls and hating one's town toward deeper (almost emo!) issues involving death, confusion and departures. Brandon has finally learned to control his pre-pubescent raspy whine and his voice takes an almost soothing quality with songs like, "Rollercoaster" and "The Whole Enormous Shit of a Shirt." The guys may have grown up, but the snottiness and catchiness that have always delivered is still there and as sharp as ever. Highly recommended. - Oliver Lyons

CORDIAL - Charmed (Tranquility Base Recordings, PO Box 120191, San Antonio, TX 78212-0191) Blending punk rock ideology with catchy hooks and sophisticated song craftsmanship, Cordial creates a sound that is quietly but carries a big stick. They may be understated musically as they stray from bombastic playing, yet there is profound emotional clarity in *Charmed*. The opening "The Tyranny of Pop" is possibly the grittiest track of the record, a bit more riotous than their other efforts. However, the gentler "Asymptotes," "You Should Have Killed Me When You Had the Chance" and the lovely "Dipole Moment" are beautiful soundscapes created by Marshall's voice and the guitar playing. When the band decides to speed things up, such as "Question One," "Underwhelmed" and the "Union Pacific," drummer James and bassist Adam are allowed to display their style as a well orchestrated rhythm section. "One Less Need" has a soothing, lullaby feel it while the band churns out an intricately woven tapestry of soft vocals and rousing guitar playing. Cordial's unique songwriting ability places them in a class by themselves. *Charmed* is an impressive collection of precise playing and heady lyrics. Highly recommended. - Rich Quinlan

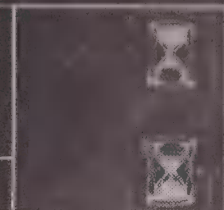
COSMIC AVENGER - The Sunlight Diner... And The Meaning Of Life (Cosmic Avenger) This Jersey City combo's self-released debut CD delivers a dozen candy-coated, Sixties-flavored pop tunes. Fronted by the brother team of John (guitar) and Gene (drums) Pompilio, Cosmic Avenger strips its catchy love songs down to the barest beats and simplest riffs, sometimes to the point where it almost sounds like they're playing toy instruments. But somehow it works. How can anyone not love a song title like "The Summer Of Love Hits Jersey City," especially with its faux-Beach Boys harmonies, or the Beatlesque riffs that kick off "DMU On LSD" and "That Was Before"? - Jim Testa

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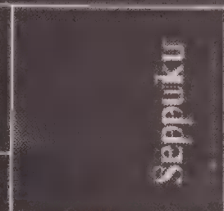
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CUSTOM MADE - *The Greatest Show On Dirt* (Side One Records, 6201 Sunset Blvd., Suite 211, Hollywood, CA 90028) Yeeeee-haw! Cowpunk trash'n'roll. Sped-up rockabilly riffs, deep-fried in motor oil, served up on greasy Tupperware for you and your bucktoothed, inbred siblings to enjoy in your trailer park home. Liquor doused, exhaust smog fueled guitar-crazy tunes like "Peterbilt", "White and Lazy", "Texas Didn't Wreck Me", and "Cud" have you a-hootin' and a-hollerin' till the break of dawn. Music in tip form to. - Ramek

CUTLASS (Some Records, 122 W. 11th St. 4th Floor NY, NY 10001) The debut 5-song CD from San Francisco Bay area's Cutlass Supreme specializes in catchy-as-fuck indie-rock/pop songs. Fans of Chapel Hill bands like Small and Archers of Loaf well the Pixies and Mega City Four should pick this up, and believe once you get it, it won't leave your CD player. The CD released by Some Records, (Waiter from Quicksand's label) who only is releasing records by hardcore bands like Hot Water Music, but also expanding into the indie rock/pop domain - which, who knows, could end up turning some hardcore kids onto some great pop music. Sergie Lookoff from Samiam just briefly finished up short stint with band bass player, who's brother Sasha is the lead-guitar player. Cutlass Supreme may not be re-writing the book on rock, but they certainly know what they like and want to play. Heartfelt pop songs that stick to your brain. - Howie K.

DAN EMERY MYSTERY - *Love And Advertising* (PO Box 20528, New York NY 10009) With acoustic guitar in hand his tongue planted firmly in cheek, singer-songwriter Dan Emery leads his mystery band through eight witty, sometimes poignant, and neatly performed tracks this very entertaining CD. Whether Emery is singing about his girlfriend's favorite bra ("everybody needs support for what they're going through") or defaulting his student loan, he strikes just the right middle ground between earnestness and goofiness. Steve Espinola's piano adds nice touch. I'll be these guys a hoot live, too. - Jim Testa

DARBY JONES - *On The Seventh Floor* (Imposter Records, PO 4531, Wayne NJ 07474-4531) This New Jersey act plays feel-good pop without the negative connotations usually associated with that style. The finest piece arrives early on the disc in the form of "Shannon", a hypnotic, gleaming pop gem. It comes compliments of bassist Rob Chojnacki, and is delivered with perfect longing agony by vocalist/guitarist Frank Stabile. Second guitarist Nick Cagnano compliments this sound with backing vocals and melodic playing. The second half of the record is less racket and more tranquility the band takes a more acoustic approach for songs like "Wall With A Hole", "King To The Queen", "Mystified" and the lovely "Faithful". In the end, I slightly unsure of the direction the band hopes to take. Their ability to handle their instruments is clear, but how loudly they want their creations to sound muddled. In any case, Darby Jones provides album of entertaining pop anthems. - Rich Quinlan

DARLINGTON - *You Up* (Melted Records, 21-41 34th Ave. Ste. 10A, Astoria, NY 1106) Very cool pop punk going on here. Darlington's drummer also played in the Queers, you know they got pop capabilities. Unlike every other pop punk band with high pitched whiny singer, this guy's got a bit of a rougher voice (not too rough, almost like Ben Weasel from the *Boogadad* era), making a nice change of pace from the clones that dominate the pop punk world. Fans of the Ramones, Queers, and Screeching Weasel - this one's for you! - Conor Moore

DEALERSHIP - *Secret American Livingroom* (Dealership, PO Box 11795, Berkeley, CA 94712-2795) A totally original, refreshing sound. Dealership give us eight songs this one, blending pop punk (there's a Weezer feel in "My Box") with (dare I say it?) hippieish, softer (Nerdy Girl). Very catchy and melodic. Mixed male/female vocals also offer a nice touch. Music for the kids bored of all the Blink-182 clones looking for something new. Emo pop? Either way it's good stuff. - Conor Moore

DEATH BY STEREO - *If Looks Could Kill, I'd Watch You Die* (Indecision Records, P O Box 5781, Huntington Beach, CA. 92615) Firstly, great for band and record. On top of that, Death by Stereo create easily one of the best hardcore records I have ever heard-just a furious barrage of noise and brute musical force. *If Looks Could Kill, I'd Watch You Die* is a ripping combination of metal, punk and old style combustible hardcore. When you throw in the band's quirky sense of humor ("Sing Along With the Patriotic Punks" and "I Legged Man in Kicking Contest"), you have one of the most promising young bands around. Each song is a testosterone fueled gem of fury, particularly "Sticks and Bones," "Death Conspiracy" and the closing "Home of the Brave." However, even with this, I was most impressed with the band's willingness to alter time signatures just enough to grant some diversity and keep things interesting. "Bet Against Me, You Lose," for example, has its volatile side, yet the guys also create a soaring, sing along chorus. Death by Stereo could be the new hardcore heroes. This! - Rich Quinlan

DEATHRAY (Team Deathray, PO Box 1111 Sacramento, CA 95819) Two ex-Cake guys, the guitar player Greg Brown and player Victor Damiani, jumped ship last year joined forces with Dana Gumbiner on vocals and James Neil on drums to form Deathray. No traces of funky basslines or trumpets

here, just straight forward power pop with a nod toward 80's new bands and the use of the popular moog synthesizer. Look for full length out this summer. - Howie K.

DECAY - "Back In The House" 7-inch EP (Suburban Home Records 1750 30th St. #365 Boulder, CO 80301) By-the-books chugga-chugga metallic hardcore from Japan that nevertheless refuses to get caught up in its own tough guy-ness, unflinchingly hitting us with a fierce barrage of riffs, and crude, animalistic vocals in brutal bursts with no shout outs, put downs, or rapping involved! Seriously one of the best new school/metalcore stuff I've heard anywhere in a long while, straight outta the land of the rising sun. - Mike Ramek

DEEP RELEASE - *Damaged Goods* (507 Grand St #1R, Trenton, NJ 08611) A four-song CD of gritty, old fashioned rock-n-roll, much like Seven Mary Three. Vocals have a bluesy touch to them. "Game Show" is a quick-paced, guitar-driven song worth noting. Good disc for all you rock fans. - Denis Sheehan

DE LA HOYA - *Has No Credibility* (Crap Records, POB 305, Eastchester, NY 10709) Six great hardcore punk songs from this four piece band out of New York. All songs fast and furious, but loaded with rhythmic grooves that will leave a smile on your face. I listened to this one work and I was asked to stop tapping and moving my feet because I was shaking all the cubes around me. Interesting and witty lyrics too. Great stuff! - Denis Sheehan

DIESEL BOY - *King Cool* (Honest Don's) Power pop it's finest here. Very catchy but also got punk touches makes this one a nice pick up for melodic punks and pop punkers alike. Reminds of Blink-182 with a punker touch. Go get this disc, rocks! - Conor Moore

DILLINGER FOUR - *Midwestern Songs of the Americas* (Hopeless, POB 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495) This is D4's first full-length and it is simply amazing. A whole lot better than any of their previous 7-inches, but with 15 songs I can't say that I was surprised. They definitely one of the best poppy melodic punk bands there today and a listen to this record will show you why. D4 has a knack of writing an all-out reckless-abandon song, and just when you think it can't get any better, they wrap up with a super-catchy ending that tops the previous two and a half minutes. Then when you can't believe how amazing that sounds, the song suddenly ends and you're onto the next track. It's this uncanny quality about Dillinger Four that makes you wince that they ended the song so abruptly and respect the fact they don't carry it on and wear out the song's welcome. Most of the songs have a recorded blurb from some old stereo soundtrack that get rid of the more you listen, but with that included, this is the best punk album to listen to while. -Matt Leines

DIMMU - *Spiritual Black Dimensions* (Nuclear Blast). Nine tracks of pure Black Metal with hints of Goth. This is the band's sixth offering, and I think it is an excellent record. The album opens with song "Reptile," which is incredible because of the mix in the vocals; it fluctuates between growls and singing over incredible keyboards, insanely fast drums, and a precise, yet brutal guitar and bass assault. Amongst other really ear openers "The Promised Future Aeons" and "Grotesquery Concealed." Definitely must have for any Black Metal fan. -Phil Pinto

DISAPPOINTMENT INCORPORATED - *F=0* (Time Bomb Recordings, 6 West 57th St., New York, NY, 10019) Some pretty good aggressive rock which focuses on the more disappointing things in life. "America" starts the disc off and really pulls you in deep with it cutting guitar and gnashing vocals. The aggressive sounding rock is nothing ground breaking, but it is good enough to warrant your attention. Skip the slower songs - boring. The lyrics very interesting is the entire disc. - Denis Sheehan

DISCOUNT - *Love, Billy* (Fueled by Ramen) Once again Discount prove their eclecticism (by covering a couple of folk singer Billy Bragg's tunes) and their perversity (by blatantly omitting, "A New England", perhaps Mr.Bragg's closest thing to a hit single!). As far as I'm concerned this band can do no wrong. James and Bill's rhythm is solid ever, Ryan has a problem transferring folk licks to blazing punk, Alison's voice hits the ethereal highs and grizzly lows with the ability and confidence of singers twice her age. An excellent punk-pop cover disc, but don't hold your breath for their White Lion tribute EP. - Oliver Lyons

DR. FRANK - *Show Business Is My Life* (Lookout! Records) Where The Mr. T Experience front man goes solo (like anyone but those 2 dozen die-hard Mr. T fans would notice). Recorded on the fly between gigs, *Show Business* is split fairly evenly between MTX-brand pop punk and introspective acoustic numbers (which have also been popping up on recent Mr. T records, to think of it). Not unpleasant with one truly standout track ("Knock Knock"), but I couldn't help thinking "Who's really gonna care?" when it all over. - Cannestra

DOG FASHION DISCO - *The Embryo's In Bloom* (Outer Loop Records, 5223 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington DC 20015) Faith No More-ish funk-metal with keyboards and annoying vocals. The playing is solid and keyboards add a nice touch, but I couldn't get into this at all. Add a fuzz pedal and they'd be Korn; if it sounds good to you, go for it. (Visit their webpage www.dogfashiondisco.com) - Jim Testa

JULIE DOIRON - Will You Still Love Me (Tree, P.O. Box 578582, Chicago IL 60657). Montreal resident Julie is the bassist and occasional singer for Eric's Trip. After they broke up, she had a couple of kids, released an album or two, and now, at the ancient age of 25, has released this 5 song ode to loneliness and uncertainty. Just a voice, a muted acoustic guitar and tons of angst. I have to admit I found this one boring after about 3 runs. It's difficult to where one song ends and the next one begins. Sometimes that's a good thing; it's basically a tapestry of sound for 20 minutes so. That's not always a good thing. Too much of the same thing can become non-entertaining. - Rodney Leighton

DORA FLOOD - Lightyear (Double Play, 41 St. Suite 1337, San Francisco, CA 94104) Twelve somber pop tunes to ruin your day. Wailing vocals along with a wailing guitar will fool you into thinking that you are listening to Radiohead or Mazzy Star. Lots of irritating samples too. - Denis Sheehan

DROPKICK MURPHYS - The Gang's All Here (Hellcat Records) You know how much these guys rock and this disc is another 16 songs that prove it. If you've yet to hear the new singer (Al Barr, formerly of the Bruisers), then you'll get the chance here. He is a little more raw and a little less melodic than Mike (original singer), but he still does the job. Once again produced by Lars Frederiksen (Rancid, dummy!), you can really tell they put time and effort to get this record sounding perfect. Listen to when the back-up vocals come in on "Upstarts and Broken Hearts" and you can really get a Rancid feel. Love the bagpipes from the album? Well, they're back with "Amazing Grace" that'll get the punkiest of you feeling all emo, at least until the guitar comes rockin' on in and then you can't help but dance. Another great album from another great band, make sure you check 'em out live too, they'll knock your socks off. Also, check out the hidden track for a good laugh! - Conor Moore

Once again, the Murphys' driving sound us back to the gritty streets and crowded pubs of Boston, spinning tales of thugs, hooligans, barroom fighters and the plight of the working man. The Murphy's score one for the working class with energetic, Irish-tinged street-punk in its and most whole-hearted form; music that maintains a sense of cultural identity and pride. Former singer Mike McColgan has been replaced by ex-Bruisers frontman Al Barr on this release. Where McColgan's voice was somewhat strained and incoherent, Barr's vocals ring through with a gruff clarity and ferocity that only adds to the already excellent sound exhibited by this band. Songs of honor, friendship, loss, and tradition can be found here, embodied in such tracks such as "Blood and Whiskey", "Ten Years of Service", "Curse of A Fallen Soul", "Going Strong", "Boston Asphalt", and "The Gang's All Here". Unforgettable melodies and vocals come together to produce what is surely one of the best streetpunk/Oil records of the year. The Dropkick Murphys put the competition to shame. A definite must have. - Mike

DUBTRIBE SOUND SYSTEM - Bryant Street (Jive Electro, 137-139 West 25th St., New York, NY 10001) Now I know what elevator music is going to sound like when the current generation of techno dance gets old and gray. This is very oriented, with lots of Latin influence. I can hear some 70s disco lines in the violins (yes, violinist). Think electronic Afro-Cuban disco dance music, and you've got it. With not even a breath, the end of one song is the beginning of the next, without even skipping a beat or a moment's silence. As a result, this thing gets pretty monotonous pretty fast. - Paul Silver

DUCKY - Live From The Banks Of The River Charles (Outsider Records, PO Box 92708, Long Beach CA 90809) This recorded live WMBR in Boston. There are only 10 songs but they all rock, including my favorite, the Dion cover "The Wanderer." I think the singer sort of sounds like the Al Barr of Dropkick Murphy's, anyone else with me? If you guys with Rancid, ya know just how much they rock. Street punk with a 50's feel and a sore throat vocals that rock. Never heard 'em? Pick it up, it's only 10 songs so it can't be that much loot. Anyone from Boston rocks! - Conor Moore

DUFUS - This Revolution (Oplulence, P.O. Box 2071, Wilmington, MA 02802) Tired of listening to plain, pedestrian, play-it-safe conventional pop music? Want to hear something that's completely wiggled out and really off the wall? Then pick up a copy of this wonderfully idiosyncratic one-of-a-kind oddity and loose yourself in one of the flakiest, most fiercely singular and eccentric albums to goof it up your stereo. Welding a manic, tripped out, try and do anything "what the hell!" experimental sensibility with a wickedly weird and carefree zany humor, thoroughly out lunch band go crazy with consummate unbridled joy, creating such certified nutso of pure sonic dementia "Outerspace Odyssey," "Wee Moo," "Loser," and the especially kooky "Fun Wearing Underwear" The exuberantly nasal, high-pitched vocals, "what the fuck

did he just say?"-style lyrics, bouncy rolling piano, incessantly crunching guitar riffs, snappy tempos, sinewy drum beats, and general air of breezy, leave your sanity at the door cheerful sonic abandon round off this splendidly inspired and individualistic musical lunacy. Incredible stuff. - Joe Wawryzniak

DWARVES - Free Cocaine 86-88 (Recess Sex, drugs & punk rock - all of it loud & most of it offensive. I can't help but love it. Such heart warming tunes "I Wanna Kill Your Boyfriend," "Nobody Likes Me" and "Fucking Life." This reminded me of the Mentors without the heavy metal overtones. I'll be the lookout for more of their stuff, and let's hope they make the reunion tour circuit again. - Tom Brebric

DWARVES - Lick It (The Psychedelic Years) (Recess Records) Except for other band's references to them, I can't say I ever heard the Dwarves, but this reissue of material from 1983-1986, lives up to its title of psychedelia. It has a garage sound to it with humor thrown in for good. Vastly different from their other reissue, *Free Cocaine 86-88*. - Tom Brebric

E-TOWN CONCRETE - "F\$ck The World" EP (Resurrection AD, PO Box 763, NJ 07701) It's one thing for white kids in breakbeat hardcore bands to appropriate hip hop's rhythms and word skills; it gets a little shady for me when they start tossing around the word "nigga." And it's simply inexcusable when the same homeboys can't relate to women as anything but "bitches." Real hardcore about treating all human beings with respect and dignity, including yourself - not putting on an act to be the toughest gangsta rapper muthafucka on the block. - Jim Testa

EL DIABLO - "The \$6.66 EP" (Coldfront Records, POB 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707) Looking for a high energy, ten minute, 5 song CD-EP about cheap wine and cars? Well, look no further. This is a fun punk disc. All the songs by a great sounding, melodic guitar and have a very attitude faced sounding vocals. I can picture these guys playing in a smoked filled bar surrounded by empty beer bottles while the masses slam before them. That is the sound they have. Very cool disc I say. - Denis Sheehan



Electric Frankenstein
Photo by Jim Testa

ELECTRIC SUMMER - Love (Soda Jerk Records, P.O. Box 4056, Boulder, CO 80306) These Japanese boys, with a traditional four-piece, single guitar line up, deliver a nice strong energy with each song. Their songs range from semi-catchy, mid-tempo tunes to very catchy and fast songs (despite the fact that the singer pronounces less than 2 syllables per line). These guys rock. There's something that just makes you like them, although it's hard to describe. I've listened to this CD four times already, and still can't figure it out. Whatever the case, there is no denying that these guys just rock. Extra-bonus: A really amazing and unexpectedly-slow ska song at the end of the CD. The only bad thing is that it's only 20 minutes long. - Rick Saporta

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN - *How to Make a Monster* (Victory) If you thought no one making true rock n' roll anymore, put your doubts away and out and this disc. EF create pure, fun punk rock the way it should be played! From cover art to the closing track, *How to Make a Monster* is thirty-five minutes of raucous sing along rock. "Cut From the Inside" and the hypnotic chorus of "Use Me" are of this all time best, and these tracks just scratch the surface of what this disc has to offer. Each of Jim Foster and Sal Canzonieri's guitar riffs are gritty, old fashioned pieces of power that will take listeners back to the days of Wayne Kramer and the MC5, while the vocals of Steve Miller have sounded so impressive. It is refreshing to hear a band that remembers that guitar, drums and make great rock n' roll-no computers, no loops, no samples, just honest punk intensity. The fury of "My World" and the bravado of "Up From the Streets" define what EF is all about a band. You also need check out the Stooges-esque "Pretty Deadly" and the explosive "I'm Your (Nothing)". This just needs to be heard! - Rich Quinlan

EMPEROR PENGUIN - *Illusion of Integrity*, Yeah (My Pal God Records, PO Box 13335, Chicago, IL 60613) Very cool trance-dance jams performed with the standard guitars/drums/bass with sampling/synth. Some of the tunes are pretty jamming, some more chill-out space-out kind of stuff. It's all good. - Paul Silver

EMPRESS (Pher, POB 750996, Petaluma, CA 94975) This CD is a compilation of a previously released LP and 7" tracks. Ethereal, slow, sparse and gentle, very gentle. It sounds like its going to fall apart any second. The fact that it never does is a testament how well they do what it is they do. Play quietly while you lay in the dark late at night. Pleasant dreams. - Sal Cannestra

THE EPISODE (Whirled Records, POB 5431, Richmond, VA 23220) Eight insane hardcore songs from the former members of legendary group Action Patrol. The songs are fast, very catchy, and loaded with rhythmic hooks and riffs. The songs bounce back and forth in tempo, but does just enough to keep you on your toes. David Grant's vocals are just as loud and obnoxious as ever. It was genuinely great to hear him scream his heart out again. Great writing, great music, great look, there is nothing negative about this disc. Just go buy it. - Sheehan

THE ERICS (553 Jersey Ave. #4R, Jersey City, NJ 07302) Off-kilter, all tunings, and strong passionate vocals from Erika Simonian are what sets the Erics apart from a lot of other modern rock bands. This 3-song CD gives you a good slice of what to expect when you hear them live. They are swirling, loud sound that falls. Hopefully a full CD will follow soon! - Phil Rainone

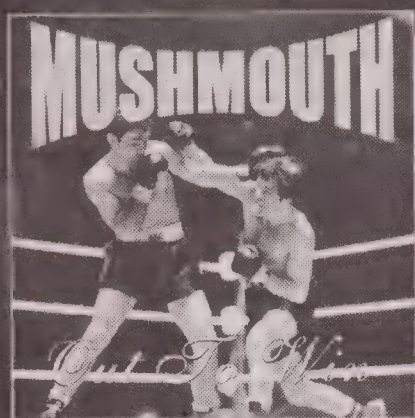
EUPHONE - *The Calendar of Unlucky Days* (Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810) A truly excellent instrumental album! Ryan Rapsys is joined here by bassist Nick Macri, but it's more drum 'n' bass deal. This is truly beautiful electro-acoustic pop-jazz-dub music. While I have enjoyed previous Euphone releases on Hefty Records, this second full-length is by far the best of the bunch. No longer content to emulate the styles of other Chicago instrumental outfits such as Tortoise and Directions in Music, Ryan and Nick manage to create their distinct style within the growing genre which Tortoise essentially created a few years back. This album is highly recommended. - Paul

EVERLOUNGE - *Set Of Muses* (P.O. Box 732 Cranford, NJ 07016) I couldn't understand the popularity of swing music when it was at its peak when I was 3 years old. I don't understand why it is making such a comeback. I do know that a lot of folks love swing music. If you're one, you should enjoy this 14 song release. The CD features interactive stuff for Mac or Windows users. Yippee. Computer nerds into music from 45 years ago will have a ball with this. Dunno if anyone else will want it, though. - Rodney Leighton

F.Y.P. - *Incomplete Crap Vol. 2* (Recess Records) A total of 40 songs, making this the longest CD I had to waste my time reviewing. The first song is good but just goes down hill from there. The recording quality is a joke and so is the screaming and extremely stupid lyrics. You couldn't pay me to sit thru this CD again! - Conor Moore

FABLEFACTORY - *American Custard* (Red Carpet Ring, RID1 Box 412C Claremont, NH 03743) Now, here's exactly what this joyless, humorless, tight-assed no-fun era needs: a ruthlessly subversive and irreverent bunch of merry, impish, throw caution and proper decorum to the wind uncouth satirical pranksters who aren't afraid to gleefully expose the intrinsic absurdity of this decade's pompous sacred cows. Health food faddism, severely compromised ideals, unattainable delusions of utopia, extremely repressed inner rage that isn't allowed to openly express, drug addiction as a hip, with-it pastime, numbing blandness and inertia of your average placid shopping mall, the ridiculous glorification of natural child birth, religious fundamentalism, religious fanaticism - all these worthy targets get taken to the cleaners and mercilessly parodied to positively hilarious and bitingly sardonic effect. The best comedy is a savage ridicule of contemporary idiocy and fucked-upness, exposing the foibles and inadequacies of modern-day life in all their laughable pitifulness. In respect, this album is smack on the money, and hence a laudable remarkable achievement. - Joe Wawrzniak

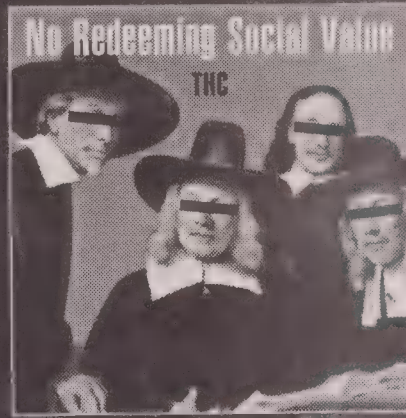
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THE [REDACTED] - *Bite Your Tongue* (Suburban Home, 1750 30th St. #365, Boulder, CO 80301) Great eight song punk rock disc. The punk music here is close to [REDACTED] and Blink 182, but The Fairlanes are more aggressive and snotty. "Mr. Poltroon" is [REDACTED] changing [REDACTED] and riffs [REDACTED] will jerk you all over your [REDACTED]. This disc [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of Madonna's "Material Girl." - Denis Sheehan

THE FALLEN - *Sector 7-G* (26701 [REDACTED] Creek, #190, Laguna Hills, CA 92656). 3-song e.p. of [REDACTED] metal. Low [REDACTED] guitars, along with death metal-like vocals, mid-tempo timings, etc. nothing really interesting or [REDACTED]. The second track is pretty cool because [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and forth from distortion and clean guitars throughout [REDACTED] [REDACTED] creating a pretty weird atmosphere. [REDACTED] pretty decent. - Phil [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - *The Monroe Doctrine* (Revelation) Ok, [REDACTED] I [REDACTED] this was a Revelation and heard the first [REDACTED] opening notes and immediately thought it was just some [REDACTED] cheesy hardcore. But, they show a softer, more melodic side. Almost Third Eye [REDACTED] kinda [REDACTED] but [REDACTED] it hits with [REDACTED] of a punk edge ala the Descendents. Very [REDACTED] guitar [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the singer doesn't really do much for me. He's [REDACTED] a higher pitched version of [REDACTED] guy from Pennywise. These guys gotta [REDACTED] a decision, [REDACTED] minute they are emo, [REDACTED] next punk and then hardcore. Some songs do [REDACTED] [REDACTED] rock appeal but overall I found the album a bit bland. - Conor Moore

FIFTEEN - *Lucky* (Sub City Records, POBox 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495) The greatest political punk group [REDACTED] is back with this tribute to their late bass player Lucky Dog, [REDACTED] activist Judi [REDACTED] who lost her battle with breast [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. This album is somewhat of a departure from earlier releases because of the loss of Lucky, who's gruff backing vocals (that I [REDACTED] really defined Fifteen's sound) obviously aren't present. Despite that, [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] Fifteen release, complete with Jeff Ott's whiny vocals and a guest appearance by members of Falling Sickness. Just [REDACTED] much of a message [REDACTED] "Choice of a New Generation" though [REDACTED] emphasis on the environment has been shifted to drugs and AIDS. This is a benefit for [REDACTED] Redwood Summer Justice Project which [REDACTED] like a good cause, so help them out. Good [REDACTED] have them back. - [REDACTED] Leines

Lengthy leftist political/social diatribes about clean syringes, the environment, [REDACTED] decay of [REDACTED] Bay, and race/class oppression are beautifully condensed into scorching melodies [REDACTED] this [REDACTED] release from NorCal legends Fifteen. The importance of the bulk of [REDACTED] message delivered [REDACTED] to outweigh [REDACTED] forum in which it [REDACTED] delivered (the music), [REDACTED] times, [REDACTED] guys [REDACTED] off as a catchy, upbeat Crass, [REDACTED] wordy melodies [REDACTED] exceeding five minutes. This band's musicianship [REDACTED] flawless, though, with crunchy layered guitar hooks and solos, [REDACTED] clean cut vocals sung with conviction [REDACTED] deliver the thoughtful messages to the listener with clarity. Songs [REDACTED] "Family Values", "My Congressman", "Man Against Man", "Evolve", "Welcome [REDACTED] Berkeley", "Mount Shrink Wrap", and "War On Drugs" manage to convey a distinct message, [REDACTED] package it in a charged, accessible mid-tempo punk rock format. The album is dedicated both to a friend of [REDACTED] bands' who took [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (as documented on the moving number "Lcky"), and to [REDACTED] memory of environmental activist Judi Bari, who was critically injured in a [REDACTED] bomb explosion. Proceeds from this album go to benefit [REDACTED] Redwood Summer Justice Project, a program with which Judi Bari [REDACTED] affiliated. It's really great [REDACTED] hear [REDACTED] with such strong convictions and ideas getting their messages [REDACTED] in a manner which rocks hard and provokes thought. An important and gratifying release. - Mike Ramek

FIRST GRADE CRUSH - *It's Not You, It's Me* (Jump Up! Records, PO BOX 13189, Chicago IL 60613) In [REDACTED] where halfway decent ska - let alone good [REDACTED] - is truly [REDACTED] endangered species, First Grade Crush surely deserve recognition as being [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] only ska/punk outfits that I [REDACTED] actually listen to without cringing in pain. Tuneful thwacka-thwacka reggae riffing mixed with a hard-edged power chord grind, horns-a-plenty (which usually bug the hell out of me-but don't on [REDACTED] release), great vocals that fluctuate between dancefloor jumpiness and punk rock ferocity, and some pretty punk lyrics about harassing rednecks and [REDACTED] enables this band [REDACTED] rise above [REDACTED] MTV-bound Warped Tour-playin', trendy-shades wearin' ska/punk muck that has been corroding the airwaves for some time now. Songs like the opening track (title too long to print), "Some Kind [REDACTED] Chase", "Big W", and "Empty" have renewed my faith in the fact that it is possible for ska [REDACTED] punk to successfully blend and rock out. [REDACTED] bad [REDACTED] all (especially considering the competition). - [REDACTED] Ramek

FIVE DEADLY VENOMS/ LUSTRE KING Split 7-inch EP (Thick Records 409 N. Wolcott Ave. Chicago, IL 60622) The Five Deadly Venoms play decent emo-ish noise punk with melodic vocals and hints of crunchy Fugazi-style sound thrown in on their track "Vice Grips". The sluggish artsy noise found on Lustre King's side under [REDACTED] "Collapse" didn't appeal [REDACTED] me at all, though. This 7" proved forgettable [REDACTED] best. - Mike Ramek

THE FLY SEVILLE- *Carousel* (Sealed Fate, PO Box 9183 #120 Cambridge, MA 02139) The second coming of Prefab Sprout? No, its Cambridge Mass's The Fly Seville, who radiate beautiful pop melodies with violins and sweet keyboards and chiming guitars. Singer Jesse Blatz has this soft soothing quality that just adds to the dreamy atmosphere. *Carousel* is [REDACTED] record of well crafted pop songs that take [REDACTED] edge off.-Howie K.

FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE - *Utopia Parkway* (Atlantic) - I'm sold just on the [REDACTED] alone. But [REDACTED] top [REDACTED] off, Fountains of Wayne impress the hell out of [REDACTED] with super catchy Beatles-esque piano layers, Elliott Smith vocal patterns, and Weezer keyboard [REDACTED]. With those elements, Fountains of Wayne get two thumbs up in my book and "Utopia Parkway" is now eligible for Feelgood Record of the Year. - David J. Brown

FRIENDS OF DEAN MARTINEZ - *Atardecer* (Knitting Factory Records, 74 Leonard St., New York, NY 10013) Predominantly, this is lounge music for [REDACTED] old west. It's relaxing [REDACTED] elevator-ish, but with cowboy melodies. But on [REDACTED] cuts, [REDACTED] easy-listening styles for rock band arrangement [REDACTED] displayed, such as "Inner Sanctum," which sounds kind of like Pink Floyd performing gospel music. OK, but nothing to get excited over. Maybe when you get to be grandpaw's age this'll [REDACTED] something you'll want to [REDACTED] to more regularly. - Paul Silver

THE FLASHING ASTONISHERS - *Everything Is Gonna Stop* (Koala Records, POB 70, Syracuse, NY 13210-0070) Well written, [REDACTED] paced rock music with cutting guitars and addicting vocals. All [REDACTED] songs have that late 80's "alternative rock" sound to them. Guitar driven music, with slower, almost whining vocals. "Aliens" is the best here because it has punk sounding riffs.- Denis Sheehan

FU MANCHU - *Eatin' Dust* (Man's Ruin, 610 22nd St. #302, San Francisco, CA 94107) Eight hard, fuzzrock tunes. The songs sound [REDACTED] blend of 70's Black Sabbath and Helmet played through a fuzz box. The fuzz is not overwhelming, but it does add [REDACTED] great character to the songs. The song speed ranges from slow to fast. The cover of "Godzilla" is on the slow side, but still rocks. "Shift Kicker" will kick you into gear with it's driving guitar and drums. This is a [REDACTED] sound to [REDACTED] and I must admit I really [REDACTED] it. - Denis Sheehan

FUGAZI - *Instrument Soundtrack* (Dischord, 3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007) Though many may be skeptical about a "soundtrack" by Fugazi, [REDACTED] assured that this [REDACTED] nothing but quality stuff, [REDACTED] filler. Comprised of demos, alternate takes, outtakes, and instrumental music made specifically for the film, *Instrument* is a nice surprise that shows a side of the band rarely sent, let alone recorded. There [REDACTED] six demos, mostly from [REDACTED] last two albums, that are very different than the originally-released versions. Ian sings a slow song while playing the piano. Guy does a very slow and differently arranged version of "Caustic Acoustic." The instrumental music holds up just [REDACTED] well [REDACTED] rest of the album, without becoming boring, repetitious, or pointless. This is another great release from Fugazi that follows their long standing tradition of making distinctive records: each with a different sound, but brilliant [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] time. - Tom Minarchick

FUZZY - *Hurray For Everything* (Catapult Records, POB 390328, Cambridge, MA 02139) Great 12-song CD from these Boston popsters. The disc opens with rousing guitars in the melancholic "Band Of Gold," then slows down for the harmony-laced "Summer Is Gone." I don't know why, but "Summer" made me want to bawl my [REDACTED] out! The vocals are shared between Hilken Mancini and Chris Toppin and they sound beautiful, with a 50's girl-band sound. I loved the way they duel and work off each other. The music [REDACTED] very catchy and loaded with melodies and harmonies. Although the entire disc is great, "Over The Edge" is my favorite here. It comes close to being a great pop punk tune. Check Fuzzy out. -Denis Sheehan

GAMEFACE - *Every Last Time* (Revelation) This [REDACTED] defines the term maturity. Gameface began [REDACTED] a no frills hardcore ensemble, but over the past decade has suffered through personal tragedies, shifting band responsibilities and evolved into a stirring mix of pop, punk and emo. *Every Last Time* features rich, textured songs that should excite fans of honest rock with a pop feel without exiling supporters of more bone breaking fury. Subtle keyboards nestled deeply in the mix of "What I Learned in School" aids in generating a warm sound for this poignant track, while "Shock Tester" sounds like something Radiohead would kill to create. Gameface's upfront, honest lyrics [REDACTED] peppered with self-deprecating humor on "Boy Wonder" and "Everything I Do is Wrong". The emo side of the band emerges on "Mercury Dimes", a lengthy and musically expansive track that closes the disc. This is highly impressive and Gameface is a band that [REDACTED] poised for [REDACTED] appeal without sacrificing their integrity. - Rich Quinlan

THE GAMITS - *This Is My Broomstick* (To The Left Records, 914 Pleasant St., Boulder CO 80302) I really love coming [REDACTED] a totally great band that I've never heard before. Such fresh sounding pop punk, not all Weasel-esque like so many others. It's got its punk [REDACTED] sprinkled with great melodic choruses. "Run Along" is one of the finest songs I've heard by anyone in a while! Just totally rocks. So what else is cool about The Gamits, besides that they [REDACTED] from my future hometown (Boulder, CO)? I'll tell you, this fucking gem is only \$6 post paid! Drop the loot, any fans of melodic punk will rejoice with happiness. In the Beatles got drunk with Green Day and started a band? Yep! Buy this! - Conor Moore

GARDENER-*New Dawning Time* (SUBPOP) Aaron Stauffer, Seaweed front-guy, and Van Conner, Screaming Tree bassist, got together and the result is Gardner. With help from various friends, Gardner [REDACTED] up a cozy blend of lo-fi grunge-folk with a distinct North West feel in the air. *New Dawning Time* is neither mind-blowing or innovative, its just good music to get high to.-Howie K.

GARRISON - *The Bend Before The Break* (Revelation) Oh boy, another release. Well, at it's kinda fast paced with some hard-edged percussion, and there's actually a fair amount of structure and melody to it. The vocals do have that trademark sensitive college rock whiny quality I always manages to get under my skin and irritate the hell outta me, though. Not very appealing, but still, this release plods along enough. I was over before I it. Ramek

STEPHEN GEORGE - *7 Years, 4 Months* (570 Rae Drive, Hartland, WI., 53029). I was extremely intrigued when this album tumbled out of the package. Gee, my friend Steve George has shifted from writing horror novels to writing advertisements to writing music. Different guy, of course. At the first listen, the analogy seemed appropriate. This Stephen George has a rather grating voice at times, especially on the opening tracks. But, dammitall, the more I listened to the thing, the more I liked it. Although I think the first two cuts are the worst on the album and I like the other 9 better, I even enjoy the first now. Gotta keep it to play again, I guess. This is another one man deal; Stephen is writer, producer, singer, instrument strummer, with a couple of guest appearances. I have listened to this about 10 times straight through and will listen to it more. Write and try to get yourself a copy. - Rodney Leighton

GOATSLAKES (Man's Ruin Records, 810 22nd St. #302, San Francisco, CA 94107) Doom-laden hard rock with thumping drums, droning guitars, and evil sounding vocals. Most of the songs are rather slow, but they are intense. "Slippen' The Stealth" is the best cut here because the melodic guitar riffs are very cool. Reminds me of a band I heard many years ago called Fudge Tunnel. - Denis Sheehan

GOD IS MY CO-PILOT - *Children Can Be So Cruel* (Miguel, Postfach, CH-8026, Zurich, Switzerland) Yikes. Ever walk into a used record store and here weird music you heard before? Well, this is it. Lots of off-key sax with weird, sometimes screeching vocals. One song sounds like a German tap dance, while another sounds features African tribal beats. Aside from the vocals (wailing woman variety) you would never suspect that all the songs are by the same band. I will say this: the guitars are fun and catchy. A weird but, oddly enough, pleasing sound. - Denis Sheehan

GOLDEN- *Super Golden Original Movement* (Slowtime, PO Box 414 Arlington, VA 22210) Indie Prog Rock from members of Trans Am, Royal Trux, and Six Finger Satellite. Golden forge 70's riff rock power chord boogie with concise angular time changes which is fused into an aggro punk energy. This is not a record you are going to want to sit down to and listen to on a regular basis, at least not me, but very once in a while, throw on the headphones and crank up the volume and let Golden take the wheel. -Howie K.

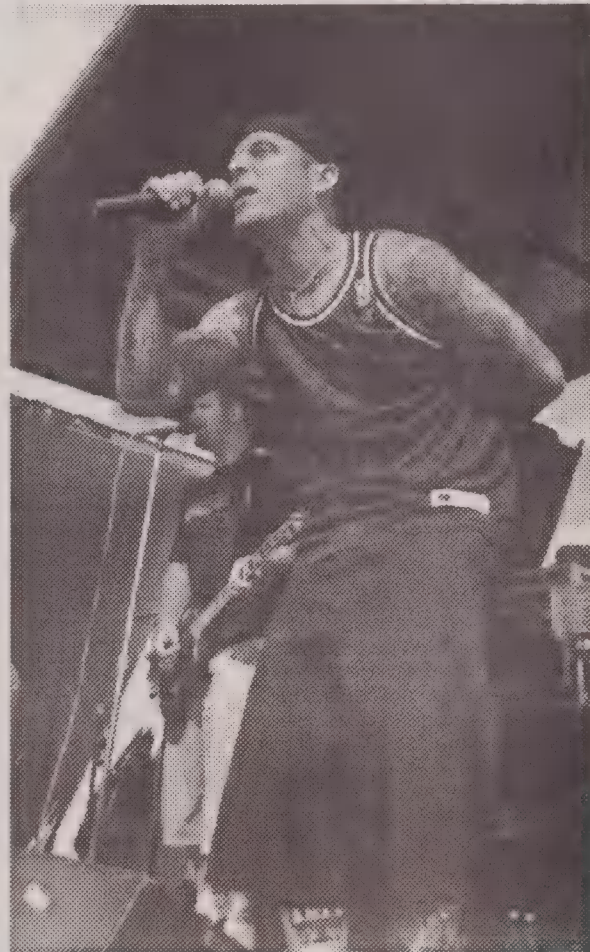
GOOD CLEAN FUN - *Shopping For A Crew* (Phyte, P.O. Box: 90363 Washington, D.C 20090) Wow! What a concept! A straightedge band with a sense of humor. These D.C boys pump out the post-hardcore that keeps the crowd both jumping up and down and pissing themselves with laughter. Nothing is left un-mocked as the guys tackle; gay rights, college kids, sharing, sell-out X'ers, cell-phone users and candy! "Tooth decay is not for me, I'm sugar free! No candy!" They've got the music to back up the messages (they've been compared to a more melodic Crucial Youth) and the singer sounds like the guy from Anti-Heroes. Kinda hard to sum up but I think Minor Threat put it when they said, "Skip, we love you." - Oliver Lyons

GOOD RIDDANCE - *Operation Phoenix* (Fat Wreck Chords) While history shows that the average band displays a tendency to tone down their sound over time on successive releases, Good Riddance just gets louder and louder. Last year's *From The Revolution* encompassed a winning mix of high-energy shout-along hardcore punk anthems, and catchy West Coast-flavored pop. The direction this band's sound has taken since then focuses strictly around their noisier proclivities, though, their newest Fat Wreck offering, *Operation Phoenix* is an unwavering 17-song hardcore punk offensive that surges through the minutes and 31 seconds of its existence with consistent aggressiveness. The electrifying layered guitar work, and machine-gun percussion, combined with vocalist Russ R.'s patented forceful battle cry remain stagnant aspects of this band's style, but gone are the catchy hook-filled numbers strewn throughout past releases. Good Riddance have taken their game to an angrier, straightforward level with the release of this album, sacrificing past musical diversity for pure hard edged impact. Play it loud. - Mike Ramek

GOODING - 12-inch Vinyl EP (S3 Records, 2718 W. 27th N, Wichita, KS 67204) More technologically brilliant material from musical whiz kid Gooding. Each of the six tracks here are layered, textured songs that stand individually, yet all convey a singular feeling. This rare vinyl features outtakes from the *Factory Blue* sessions, and continue to display the vastness of this man's talent. The record begins with "Silly Boy", an enormous, booming track similar to the apocalyptic sounds featured on the amazing *Factory Blue*. Whether it's the furious drum n' beats that pummel "Bash" and "New York", or the lovely acoustic guitar playing buried in the mix of "Crime Scene", Gooding's talent continues to amaze. The thick bass groove of "Miami Beach Blvd." effortlessly coexists with lush piano to create a wholly original piece that typifies a Gooding offering. The varying tempo and time changes maintain a fluidity rarely heard, as most of the song segments feel forced or out of place. Rather, Gooding captures a multitude of

energy levels and emotional soundscapes. Finally, Big Lump adds a hilarious sample to "4.4", a trippy, bouncy track dominated by pulsating steady beats with a warm texture. This guy never lets me down, just incredible. - Rich Quinlan

GOODING - *Collection 1* (Sixth Sense Studios, 2718 W. 27th St., N. Wichita KS 67204) The one-man visionary known to the world only as Gooding not only possesses an immense amount of talent, but he's equally prolific. Luckily, he has decided to release another assortment of his musical hybrid of sounds called *Collection 1*, comprised of demo tracks and sides from his *Factory Blue* and *Return* sessions. The 11 cuts here are generally of a more subdued, nature, blending drum loops, scratching, airy synth lovely acoustic guitar playing into one stirring result. Gooding has an intricate ability to take the listener on limitless journeys of the mind, lush new age sounds suddenly meld with a mechanized backbeat, such as the impressive "Technology's Nature" and "Machine Dance." "Derailed (Sync, Pt. II)" is the product of an artist still experimenting with sound as fragile keyboards hover just above a rapid fire drum n' bass groove before giving way to a steadier beat, while "If the Empire Crumbles"



H20

Photo by Shawn Scallen

comes from his *Winter Returns* sessions and displays Gooding's prowess as a guitar player. The more experimental "Bathyal Zone" is one of my favorites here as Gooding achieves a myriad of harmonies within a loosely defined soundscape. The same holds true for closing "Ink Black World". I cannot hear enough from this guy. - Rich Quinlan

THE GRADUATES - *Up In Downtown* (Beatville Records, P.O.Box 42462, Washington, DC 20015) The Graduates are billed as a swing/ska band, but they are much more! In the mix there's also rockabilly and revved-up rock n' roll. They take these styles and bring them up to the next level. The opening cut, "Badville," is a rollicking, horn-driven story of a "blasted, crazy town," that paves the way for what's to come. "Chuck," (about Charlie Brown), has a honky-tonk swing to it. Along with the rest of the band Monty McCune (guitar/vocals), livens up the platter with bouncy guitar licks. "telephone," (about waiting for her to call), is a cool, danceable ska-styled tune. I haven't had this much fun listening to a CD in a long time! - Phil Rainone

THE GREY A.M. - *Move the Monuments* (Fiddler Records, PO Box 330667, Miami, FL 33233) If you've listened to any of the Midwestern emo-pop bands over the - like Gauge, Braid, Promise Ring, and so on - then you'll know what to expect from this Pennsylvania outfit. It sounds like they could have come right out of Illinois or Wisconsin, because they have a very similar sound to the aforementioned bands. It's got a breezy pop feel, while there's simmering emotions underneath it at the same time. Since I really like that kind of sound, I like this disc. - Paul Silver

GROOVIE GHOULES - *Fun In The Dark* (Lookout! Records) The Ghoules are back with 13 of their pop punk songs about vampires and spells and all that shit. The album leaves me with a 'been there, done that' kinda feel. Too much like everyone else. Did these guys get a new singer? This guy sorta sounds like a high pitched Danzig! Very Ramonsey (holy shit! That's original!) Sorry fellas, I hate this disc but I don't really like the album. - Conor Moore

THE GUILLOTEENS - *Crawl Your Nightmare* (377 Crooks Ave. Apt. 4, Clifton, NJ 07011) For a five song CD from a young indie band, this disc rocks with some of the best (Cramps, Ramones, etc!) A three-piece from Jersey (Ritchie Murder/guitar,vocals, Beta Karateen/guitar, & Evil/drums), the Guilloteens create a wicked dancefloor groove. There's more than enough feedback distortion to really get your adrenaline pumping! Hopefully, we'll see a full CD in the near future. Until then, see them live for a full dose of manic music. Favorites: "Spooky Little Rats," "Devil in Miss Valentino," & a slammin' version of "Stick Out Your Can" - good stuff! - Phil Rainone

H2O - F.T.T.W (Epitaph Records)- Well, it's been three years since H2O graced us with their debut LP on Blackout! Records, and their sound hasn't really undergone any drastic changes since then. The Epitaph release *F.T.T.W* (which stands for a whole lot of things, I've learned, including Faster Than The World, Following 'Thicker Than Water', Found The Truth Within, Follow The Three Way, etc...) still maintains the old-school mid-'80s East Coast hardcore style with melodic undertones, the same familial NYHC (guest vocalists on this album include Roger Mirel, Freddy Madball, and Civ (!)), and the same overall positive, fast-paced shout-along hardcore punk that permeated the last two albums. Sure, the sound may be a little more polished, and there may be a few more hooks thrown in here and there, but the heart-pounding immediacy and spirit of the music definitely remains the same. Forget the "sellout" hype, these guys have not forgotten their roots at all, and all tracks are good. "Faster Than The World", "One Life, One Chance", "Bootstraps", "Found The Truth Within", "Oldschool Recess", and "Liberate", it really doesn't matter what anyone has to say. -Mike Ramek

HAGFISH - *Caught Live* (Coldfront) An unnecessary live album from an uninteresting band. Hagfish play melodic punk rock that sounds like an aggressive Squirtgun. Bland tunes with the "We've-heard-it-one-too-many-times-before" lyrics about failed relationships and silly girls. The best part of this album is the on-stage patter the band keeps up with the audience throughout the duration of the CD. I assume it's a clever trick to engage the kids who they don't have enough time to figure out how crappy the band they're watching are. Good move. - Oliver Lyons

HAIL MARY - *All Aboard The Sinking Ship* (Vermiform, POB 12065, Richmond, VA 23241) Eleven fast and in your face punk/hardcore rock. The melodic madness and aggressive vocals work hand in hand to bring together a great sound. All around great disc.- Denis Sheehan

THE HEARTDROPS - *East Side Drive* (Melted Records, 21-41 34th Avenue #10A, Astoria, NY 11106) Yummy (if a bit greasy) power-pop with a 70's punk rock twist. If you know the Real Kids, you'll hear the influence right away. If not, just think bubblegum in a black leather jacket. - Jim Testa

THE HELLACOPTERS - *Grande Rock* (Sub Pop) High-octane garage rock with some glam influence. The songs are fast and catchy as all hell. Lots of guitar solos for you guitar fans out there. I will admit, it took a couple of listenings to this disc. Entertaining, fun, and the sound is a good one. These guys play like they are having fun. - Denis Sheehan

HELLCHILD - *Circulating Contradiction* (Howling Bull America, P.O. Box 40129, San Francisco, CA 94140-0129). Damn! These Japanese dudes are extremely pissed! This is their debut album, which is comprised of ten tracks of pure brutality and speed. The lead singer yells as if his arms and legs are being separated. In a way, his voice reminds a tiny bit of Phil from Pantera, except this guy has a lot more balls! Pantera could take a few tips from these guys. The riffs are thick, low, and death metal-like for the most part. The drums are fast, and the beats are very original; with being a drummer, it amazed the hell outta me cause it seems like everybody plays the damn beats all the time. Excellent recording, definitely worth a listen. - Phil Pinto

HONEYGLAZED - *The Trouble With Girls* (Wonderdrug, PO Box 111, Boston MA 02123) Imperial Teen-ish type pop with alternating male and female vocals, and occasional dance beat thrown in for good measure. Not quite dancin' enough, not quite rockin' enough, tho, and the overall effect of the album seems to be akin to a silent fart rather than the sonic boom of pop fusion this band is certainly capable of accomplishing.- Oliver Lyons

HONKY TOAST - *Whatcha Gonna Do Honky?* (550 Music) I was put off by the expensive looking color comic that came with this -blah blah, about how the band spared no expense, etc. -gee, tough to do when you've got Sony picking up the tab. Be that as it may, this is half decent. A funky/scummy sound and a fucked up view of life are evident in songs like "High School Burnout," "I Wanna Be On Welfare" and others. Some songs tend to be slower and more expressive, but then "Hair In My Teeth Again" is probably in tune with the mentality at work here. - Tom Brebric

HOSTILE OMISH - *One Horse Power* (Plunge Records, 6570 Richmond Rd, Oakwood OH 44146) 40 minutes and 16 tracks of generic CRAP. Their lyrics



Chris Barrows, The Jackie Papers

aren't much better. I think I wrote quite similar when I was 10. Three songs are about the singer crying to his mom. One song is called "Vegetarian;" I started reading the lyrics, thinking at least there is ONE song with substance - but it's about the singer trying to get with a girl who is a lesbian, and he says that being gay is a "bad habit." Way to help out the battle for equality. The other songs are about drinking and other stupid topics. Where they list each person's instrument, they also inform you of each of their favorite beer. Yeah, I forgot how damn punk is to drink and write stupid lyrics to even worse songs. - Rick Saporta

HOT WATER MUSIC - *Live At The Hardback* (No Idea Records, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604) Hot Water Music are fucking melodic/emotional/punky/hardcore, and this live album is a great testament to their live show. The songs are recorded really well, but the talking in between is so low that you have to turn up the stereo in order to hear it. Twelve songs in all, including both

A-sides from their two 7" singles on No Idea, and LEATHERFACE cover. Amazing black and white photography and packaging, especially in the 12" which comes with a larger booklet. Buy this and get ready for their fourth album due out later in the summer. - Matt Leines

HOT WATER MUSIC/TOMMOROW - Split EP (No Idea Records, POB 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604-4636) First off, you get more amazing cover art here by Scott Sinclair. This has four tracks by Hot Water Music which were first released on their out of print debut. Lyrically, these are some of their best and some of my favorite HWM songs. The recording isn't up to the quality of their full lengths, but since the songs are so good, you'll be able to look past that. Tomorrow deliver six songs in a style similar to HWM but a bit heavier. This is my experience with this band, but it left me wanting to hear more. Limited and hand numbered edition, too. - Matt Leines

HYPOCRISY - *Hypocrisy Destroys Wacken* (Nuclear Blast, P.O. Box 43618, Philadelphia, PA 19108). The 11 tracks on this CD are live, and the remaining 4 are studio recordings. The quality of the live recording is pretty decent. The music is basic Deathmetal: fast, slow at times, long-ass songs. It seems like the 4 studio tracks are rockish than the live ones. The vocals aren't as hard and neither is the music. All in all, I'd only hear the live tracks. - Phil Pinto

ILL REPUTE - *Wish You Were Here* (Indecision Records, POB 5781, Huntington Beach, CA 92615) This disc is a 22-song re-release of early material from these 15-year hardcore punk veterans. Included are "Land Of No Toilets" (their first EP), "What Happens Next" (1984 debut LP), and tracks from the *Nardcore* compilation. As far as I'm concerned, there's nothing better than early hardcore punk. Get this and you'll hear why. Great disc. - Denis Sheehan

INDECISION - *To Live In New York City* (EXIT Records, PO Box 263, New York, NY 10012) More primal, evil HARDCORE from Brooklyn. These guys have replaced former vocalist Tom Sheehan with Artie Philie of Milhouse fame on this eight song EP, featuring some re-recorded stuff from past releases, and new songs. Suffering, misery, and tales of society gone to hell presented with an unsettling, gloomy metalcore flavor, hitting home with bone-crushing impact. Very metallic, very angry. Another harrowing release from Indecision. - Matt Leines

INSPECTOR 7 - *Banished In Bogeyland* (Radical Records) Once you get past the blistering horns (like "The Gone"), the rock-steady beats (any song), and the devilish guitar work (from Tim Boyce) - which is almost impossible - you're left with some memorable lyrics. On "Regret II," one line goes, "A shallow mind will always be a slave." On "Asbury Park," they describe what the city is now, ("There's a place I know that makes your blood run cold") compared to what Asbury used to be, a hot bed for original music and a popular shore resort. This never lets you down. "Reshape" rivals Madness' "One Step Beyond" in intensity and sheer all out fun! Some great original ska! Let's hope the band doesn't get *Banished In Bogeyland* - Laurel Hardy in *Babes In Toyland* (one of my favorite flicks!) - Phil Rainton

JOE PAPERS - "I'm In Love" CD/EP (Panic Button, PO Box 148010, Chicago IL 60614) Not quite as corrosive as what we expect from ex-Pink Lincolns yowler Chris Barrow, this 6-song furnace-blast of old-school punk-rock vitriol still packs a decent punch, tossing together a little Ramones, some Angry Samoans, a plenty of snarly anti-PC attitude (who else but Chris would write a song making fun of cripples and get away with it?) His all-gal backing band of some newly-improved chums, well, with riffage almost as tight as their blouses and a few guitar solos nearly as long as their rap sheets. Watch out for a tour this fall. - Jim Testa

JETPACK (Sampson Records, 105 Borden Rd., Tiverton RI 02878) This artistically stylish and musically diverse Rhode Island trio offers a wide array of articulate and precise prowess in their self titled disc. Jetpack is a band that relies on altering the listener's conception of what a guitar, bass and drumkit can do by thickening their sound with street noise and general four track mayhem. In addition, the guys rip things up when they want to; the raucous "Investigation" and "Inself" are examples of an act that places music first and allows vocals to simply add to the intensity without being the focal point. While the band plays with passion, there is still a controlled sense about their noise; nothing attempted by the band gets out of hand, and just as a song sounds as if it will spin out of control, Jetpack quickly changes tempo. Craig Gifford's bass and Jeff Lambert's drumming fuel this act with a neverending fury and dazzling timing, while guitarist/vocalist Keith Souza tests the experimental limit of his guitar work, most expertly heard on "Sam Didn't Like the Kite Scene" and "Hopscotch". His playing can be controlled and steady ("Hope St.") or far more manic, as on "Little Big Band". This is wildly original and exciting act. Definitely worth your time. - Rich Quinlan

JFT - Falling (FMA records) For Today's full throttle, energetic SoCal pop punk blasts off on the first track "Me Myself and I", and gets even better from there. "Conditioned", the second song, is one of the catchiest damn tunes I've heard in a long while, with a mix of hooks, and pounding punk rock rhythms to boot. While these guys by no means musical geniuses (the band's sound can easily fit into the NOFX/Fat Wreck-style pop punk genre), their enthusiasm is impossible to ignore. In addition to the opening two tracks, songs like "Not

Mine", "Falling", "Dude", and a pretty good cover of the Descendents classic "Hope" serve to strengthen this album. Unfortunately, the energy the band generates early on seems to eventually wane under the weight of too many generic and ultimately forgettable pop punk tunes as the album progresses. At their best, the band definitely rocks like few other SoCal pop punk outfits today. - Mike Ramek

JIMS BIG EGO - *Don't Get Smart* (Eastern Front Records, 7 Curve St. Medfield, MA 02052) Okay, for the record - I hate groove music. I don't even like it when I'm high. I want a band to really rock me, not just kind of sway me from side to side. After listening to this 11-song CD, I feel like I just got off a long, crowded train ride. Maybe I'm being a bit harsh; there were some good things happening. The drumming is tasteful, not getting beat-heavy or overwhelming, and kudos to the bass player for great slides and fills on the upright bass. The singer's vocal is strong, too. But without any drive, this music has no balls. Jim, loose the ego; you're never too old to rock. Unless you're catering to the uneducated college students of Boston. - Kristin Forbes

JOAN OF ARC - *Live In Chicago, 1999* (Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810) This has got to be the closest thing you'll ever come to the perfect blending of ambient, psychedelic, pop, jazz, and folk music. The music tends toward the quietness, calmness, and minimalism of a lot of ambient music, with bits of electronics here and there. Acoustic and electric guitars dance around each other, and front man Tim Kinsella drags his trumpet out again. This time, the trumpet seems a lot more in place than it ever did in the late, great Cap'n Jazz. This is an excellent release, much better than the debut "Portable Model Of" from a couple of years ago. This makes me want to go back and check out what I missed in their album of last year that I skipped. Oh, and no, this is not a "live" album in the sense of it being recorded live in a club performance or something. But the music is certainly alive. - Paul Silver

JOAN OF ARC - *Live In Chicago, 1999* (Jade Tree 2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810) Nearly as scary as the title implies, this is not a "live" record in the "recorded live in some club in front of a paying audience". In fact, I'm not sure in what this is a live record. It's just the latest batch of melancholy, bitterly funny and just this-side-of-pretentious songs from a band I could easily hate, but don't. Whether or not the majority of the overly earnest following gets it, these guys can be very funny in a grad school, smarty pants sort of way. And while the bullshit quotient is just as high here as say, on the latest from The Cranium or The Make-Up, JOA hides theirs under nothing less than absolutely beautiful and memorable melodies. God bless their pointy little heads. - Sal Cannestra

JOAQUINA - *The Foam And The Mesh* (Future Farmer Recordings, PO Box 883311 San Francisco, CA 94188) Joaquina hails from the sun beaten San Joaquin Valley, which is nestled in somewhere between Sacramento and Bakersfield California. It is there that Joaquina has shaped their patent "Moo Wave", which is takes the heartfelt folkiness of Neil Young and loose lo-fi minimalist sounds of the Violent Femmes and comes out sounding like corn fed indie rock. Is John Cougar an indie rocker? - Howie K.

JOE CRUSHER (Coldfront Records, P.O. Box 8345, Berkley, CA 94707). Good ol' New York Punk Rock. Pretty fun, high-energy, has heart to it, but I think the vocals are lacking something. The music is pretty cool, kinda like a mixture of Surf and Punk Rock. - Phil Pinto

JOSHUA - *The Theory* (Doghouse Records, PO Box 8946, Toledo, Ohio 43623) This was a very pleasant surprise. Joshua could be classified as an emocore band, but the emphasis is definitely on the emo as the core. The guys went to the legendary Inner Ear Studios to record *The Theory*, and they walked out with pristine piece of bass heavy, highly articulate fair driven by strong guitar playing from J. Kip Count and Dan Coutant. Coutant is also the lead vocalist, and each song wraps it self around his warm, emotionally charged vocals. Each member's individual role is prominently on display during each song, as bassist Keith Bogart and drummer Shane Chikeless generate a masterful low end sound, and direct the band through numerous shifts in tempo. The band's poetic lyrics adds to the grace of their playing, such as the haunting nature of "Just Can't Change," "The Hard Part is Letting Go" and my personal favorite here, "Divide Us," a love song that also mentions what could go wrong. The band explores the wonderful and negative sides of relationships with maturity and insight. However, the guys are not just all soft spoken pop, as the concluding efforts, "Idiot and Irritants" and "Piss On Your Parade" indicate. This band has a devoted following and after hearing this record, I can understand why. - Rich Quinlan

JUNE OF 44 - *Anahata* (Quarterstick Records, PO Box 25342, Chicago IL 60625) This geographically scattered act creates a wild musical voyage of noise, grooves and improvisational brilliance. Each song walks a thin line between frailty and luxurious strength as the members manipulate time sequences like mad scientists creating a new monster. *Anahata* owes its unique flavor from the squeaks and squalls created during June of 44's tour. The band taped the majority of its live performances, searching for those unplanned and unexplained bits of genius that can occur on stage during the course of a tour. These skeletal pieces became the cornerstones for the eight songs presented here, such as the jarring beauty of "Cardiac Atlas," featuring the lovely addition of Julie Lui's viola. The challenging nature of the music is to be expected after you

examine the resume's of members Fred Erskine, Sean Meadows, **Bill** Mueller and Doug Scharin. These four have been involved in pivotal indie bands such as Rodan and Hoover, to name only a couple. Underlying all the experimentation is impressive musicianship, particularly Scharin's stirring percussion of "Equators to Bi-Polar," a song accented by Erskine's trumpet playing. There is a haunting tranquility about **Bill** work here, exemplified by the lovely "Escape of the Levitational Trapeze Artist" and "Recorded Syntax," a song in which the vocals **Bill** rise above a steady monotone, yet **Bill** convey an astonishing force. June of 44 is a band that is not for everyone, for they push the boundaries of what is passing as rock today. **Bill** you are willing, lose yourself in the vision of these four highly articulate and intelligent players. - Rich Quinlan

JUNO - *This is The Way it Goes And Goes...* (Pacifico, 1916 Pike Place #12-370, Seattle WA 98101) Ambient, abstract guitar noise, convoluted **Bill** rock, and crooned vocals. I suppose many art-rock critics might comment on the "superior artistry" of this band, the "brilliant creation of unique sound" exhibited on **Bill** album through the use of three guitars, and the "varied powerful moods" embodied in the music. I, however, found this release sluggish and boring. Granted, these **Bill** know how to play their instruments, but I could never **Bill** myself leisurely popping this one in my CD player, and sitting down to listen **Bill** this **Bill** on **Bill** whim. Too "artsy" for my tastes. - Mike Ramek

DAMIEN JURARDO - *Rehearsals for Departure* (Sub Pop) Very cool, laid back folk and folk-pop, **Bill** unlikely release for **Bill** label known for bringing Seattle grunge to the world. The opener on this disc is in the style of Bob Dylan, with solo guitar and occasional harmonica. But Jurardo's voice is **Bill** lot more pleasant than Dylan's ever was. Some other tracks are more on the pop side, but always with **Bill** folk edge to them. "Eyes for Windows" is **Bill** fantastic standout track of beautiful acoustic guitar and string ensemble, with touching lyrics. - Paul Silver

KEEPSAKE - *The Things I Would Say* (Eulogy Recordings, PO Box 8692, Coral Springs, FL 33075) Screamy emo from Florida that mellowes out then gets all screamy again. This is **Bill** good record. Its got a real good pop-punk song too. - **Bill** Leines

KILL HOLIDAY - *Somewhere **Bill** the Wrong is Right* (Revelation, POB 5232 Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232) Kill Holiday may **Bill** check Soulside and Rites of Spring (alongside Ride and The Charlatans) in their press release,

but this is dreamy, Brit-style 80's pop all the way. Chorus-y guitars and reverbed vocals rule this decidedly un-Revelation like Revelation release. This is sure to throw the average Damnation AD fan for **Bill** loop, but it is also quite infectious, energetic and honest pop music. However, it ultimately gets a little tiresome over **Bill** course of 57 minutes. - Sal Cannestra

KILL THE MESSENGER - *All **Bill** Angels Crash and Burn* (Indecision Records, P O Box 5781 Huntington Beach, CA. 92615) Positively furious hardcore from a skilled three piece consisting of former Outspoken members John Coyle and Dennis Remsing who joined forces with current Death by Stereo bassist Paul Miner. The band draws instant Black Flag analogies, as their sound replicates and expands upon *Damaged*-era Flag with intensity and furious playing. Coyle's vocals slightly resemble **Bill** younger, more angry Rollins, while his guitar playing is **Bill** thick, basement tape style, particularly on the scathing "Pathetic." The band revolves its lyrics around themes of isolation ("Staring Outside"), desperate anger ("Slow Burn," "Hope for What Future?") and overwhelming frustration ("Pulled Under"). This **Bill** seventeen minutes of highly energized, bold hardcore. It's **Bill** but that this material would **Bill** explosive live. Definitely worth checking out.-Rich Quinlan

THE KILL VAN KULL - *Human Bomb* (Eyeball Records) Ten song CD with mostly intense, fast paced aggro-rock. The harmonic grooves and melodic riffs **Bill** out loud. The **Bill** and loud guitars carry this album. The vocals are just as nasty, in a good way of course. The other songs **Bill** rather slow and spooky sounding **Bill** kind of drag the LP down. - Denis Sheehan

KILL YOUR IDOLS - *This is Just the Beginning* (Blackout Records) I can't stop singing along to the lyrics that go, "I don't fucking want you, I don't fucking need you anymore" -that attitude pretty much sets the tone for this. Hard feelings about passivity, sincerity and integrity and senseless hate **Bill** what make this **Bill** worthwhile CD. - Tom Brebric

THE KISS OFFS - *Goodbye Private Life* (Peek-a-Boo, POB 49542, Austin, TX 78765) Looking for some great garage rock led by a mean guitar **Bill** will knock your socks off? Here it is. Fourteen great guitar driven songs with beautifully shared male/female vocals. Every song **Bill** carried by the catchy, melodic, and down right **Bill** sounding guitars. Very cool disc for all you garage rockers. - Denis Sheehan

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Land Speed Record

LAND SPEED RECORD

The Corporate Secret

(Resin Records, PO Box 5601, Washington DC 20016) Don't let the name fool you. Land Speed Record was more to the Talking Heads than Husker Du, almost any comparison pales in the wake of what these post-punk absurdist do with their heady mix of brain-tickling lyrics and heart-stopping rhythms on their second full-length. The Baltimore trio fill out its sound with help from local legend Lee Harvey Keitel, but its fuller guitar sound doesn't lessen the impact of Thomas Stehr's lead riffs or drummer Marc Berrong's precision drumming. Wielding its command of dynamics like a weapon, LSR uses the empty spaces in songs more effectively than most bands guitar solos, creating moments of tension and release while front-man Charles Jamison yowls about sex with fax machines ("Interoffice Copulation," penile erection syndrome ("Viagra Orgy," necrophilia ("Dead Girlfriend.") Sound weird? It is, but you'll be busy bouncing of the first you won't notice.

- Jim Testa

LANDED - *Everything's Happening* (Vermiform, POB 603050 Providence, RI 02906) 7 tunes in 38 minutes; no song titles, in fact very little info provided whatsoever. Did I mention it's on Vermiform. For those familiar with the label I think you can make a good guess what this sounds like. For everyone else, think of Flipper the sense of humor. Then think again. - Sal Cannestra

LAST SUMMER - *Remember Those Days...* (Drive-Thru, PO Box 55234, Shreveport, LA 70113) Nope, this is not a summer album though the name would lead you to believe (at least to me). This is some punk with horns. I know you're thinking, 'been there, done that', but stay with me here. This totally rocks. Totally sounds like Fifteen (especially the lyrics and the sound of the singer's voice), the horns are few and far between so you sorta forget about 'em. But then they come in and you're just like, 'yeah, rock on!'. Imagine Fifteen with some horns thrown in here and there, and if that sounds good, you really enjoy this album. - Conor Moore

LEATHERFACE / **HOT WATER MUSIC-BYO** Split Series Vol.1 (BYO Records) This unique CD couples the leaders of the post-punk genre. The recently reformed Leatherface offer up six songs of introspection, sung in a gruff, backed by music that sounds like more melodic American Standard. I wish I had these guys earlier. Hot Water Music, Florida's favorite bearded bad boys, follow up with sonic blasts that only a band like HWM could pull out. If you haven't heard them, they sound like Fugazi if only Fugazi good. An interesting idea for an album and definitely worth checking out. - Oliver Lyons

BEN LEE - *Breathing Tornadoes* (Grand Royal) The very opposite of the well-manicured synthscape is the savage brutality of a slightly out-of-time acoustic guitar. The most violent sound in rock and roll, according to Ben Lee in a MTV interview, and sound which excites him most. It's ironic, then, that *Breathing Tornadoes* is so tame -- so beholden to the basic, sanitized FM radio conventions of rhythm guitar playing. I'm sure that Lee wants a hit song much more than anybody else, and he's smart enough to realize that the early Ani DiFranco approach is a damn good way to avoid heavy rotation; nevertheless, he ought to realize that his musical ambitions have been crippled by his sonic choices. His fans are hard-core as anybody's, those of us still wondering why Lee has merited much more attention than, say, Old Skull aren't going to find anything here to increase our admiration of his project or understanding of his cult following. Lee possesses a sweet, sub-Andy Bell vocal style, and he gets enough grit in it to deliver some big, heartbroken sentiments; in fact, much of *Breathing Tornadoes* resembles Oasis, if they had been produced by Shawn Colvin. But besides the crystal-clear production approach, the difference -- and this is oh so crucial -- is that you'd never catch Noel Gallagher saying something as lunkheaded as "there's a difference between us just like me, deep and blue". There's a fine line between moving lyrics and mawkish cheese, and dopest that will capsize grandiose ambitions every time. Marginally better to radio than Matchbox 20. - Tris McCall

LEFT FOR DEAD - *Splitting Heads* (No Idea, POB 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604) Holy insane Canadian hardcore punk, Batman! These guys are nuts! Fast, loud, energetic and very good are just a few adjectives to describe Left For Dead. Twenty-seven energetic punk rock songs that really kick into high gear can be heard here. The last ten songs are live. Lots of Minor Threat influence. This is a great disc for all you hardcore maniacs. - Denis Sheehan

THE LILLINGTONS - *Death By Television* (Panic Button, P.O. Box 14810, Chicago, IL 60614-8010) Ramonsey pop punk, but not your typical pop punk band. This 3 piece, hailing from Wyoming, delivers 14 catchy tunes from everything from hating to go to work, to apemen, to robots (not your typical songs about girls! what a nice change of pace). This one's got all the super-lovable poppy solos along with the great back-up vocals and the occasional 1-2-3-4. The singer's voice is quite unique and at the beginning, I wasn't sure about it; but after a few listens, I know it rocks. And call me crazy, but I hear a little Danzig in there ("Codeman: Peabrain"). Once again, Panic Button gives me a reason to continue living! - Conor Moore

LIMP - *Guitarded* (Honest Don's) If you're anything like me, you heard Limp's song on the Honest Don's *Welcome Wagon* compilation and fell in love. Well, I'm a little disappointed when I first put this in; but the more I listen to it, the more I realize it totally rocks. Strung Out meets Green Day? Yes, because it's got all the cool muted guitar parts (who doesn't love that?) and the singer sounds like Billie Joe. I think I'd call this more power pop than pop punk, but all you have to call it is yours cause you should really buy this album. Total fucking rock! My new favorite band? Showoff rules but they are up there! - Conor Moore

LIMP - *Fine Girl* (Fueled by Ramen) Bland, melodic pop-rock. Nothing here kept me real interested. "Fine Girl" is the best song and it's only :30 seconds. If that's worth six bucks then go get this. Otherwise, at least be happy they don't have a misleading name. Truth in advertising people. - Oliver Lyons

LAURIE LINDEEN - *A Pregnant Pause* (Monolith Record Group, P.O. Box 990980, Boston MA 02199) Lindeen, founder of Minneapolis' ZuZu's Petals (I bet you just HAD to know that, right?) wrote a novel, became pregnant, and then decided to create some music. She did a delightful cover of "Don't Go Out Into The Rain" on her due date. It actually sounds a lot better than when Herman and his Hermits did it. Her cover of "Run To Me" also sounds better than when the Gears did it but that's not hard. However, the songs written by Laurie while carrying her son in her belly are all nice pop tunes, very well written, with relevance to her condition and children and love. This lady has a beautiful voice, and sings very well. And she had excellent help from her musician friends. - Rodney Leighton

LIQUID GANG - *Nineteenth Soul* (Gotham Records, PO Box 20188, New York, NY 10014) This Philly-based five piece have been performing and honing their sound for a number of years now, and the effort is reflected on this highly polished release. Unfortunately, the band's sound, while refined, is nothing particularly original. The

■ begins with the ill-fated hip-hop vocals of "Refuse to Lose," ■ lackluster song that blends guitar crunch with ■ played ■ groove. In the end, it sounds flat. The guys in Liquid Gang are better served by sticking to a more straightforward approach, ■ heard ■ "9 Points," "Down," "High" and "IP." All of these songs ■ ■ double-vocal ■ of Chris Holt and Jose Maldonado. In addition, the band has enough musical ■ ■ blend eloquent harmony with more distinct tempo changes to generate songs with ■ defined path. In the end, *Nineteenth Soul* ■ radio potential, but the playing is not going to change your life. - Rich Quinlan

LIT - ■ *Place In The Sun* (RCA) Okay, I'm sure you've heard their very Blink182-like song, "My Own Worst Enemy," on the radio. Don't get me wrong, I really like the song, it just sounds like Blink 182. These ■ ■ tough to categorize. They open up with ■ song that most of ■ would believe is from the Descendents. Then they mix everything from punk rock (a lot of the guitar riffs sound like Green Day's ■ ■ more radio-friendly stuff ("Zip Lock," although good, could totally be ■ Third Eye Blind song). Overall, ■ album lacks and I'm glad I didn't throw any loot down for it. By the time you read this (June, it's now March) they will either be very popular (which they're more than capable of) or will be another one hit wonder. Fuck the majors, tape it from the Hot Topic girl down the street. - Conor Moore

LITTLE GRIZZLY - *Please Let ■ Go. It Wasn't ■ to Be* (Quality Park, PO Box 2464 Denton, TX 76202) The singing and songwriting talents ■ George Neal are the focal points of Little Grizzly, ■ roots-rock, semi-acoustic trio from Texas. Neal has lyrical skills that reminded ■ of ■ younger, ■ forthright Paul Westerberg. Songs like "Next to Nothing," the melancholy "Ringing" in my Ears" and the bluesy "Bringing' ya Down" hit raw nerves ■ they retell stories with heartfelt reflectiveness ■ ■ element of disgust. ("How ■ you say I'm bringin' ■ down/ When I can't even stand up?") The band mixes and matches its sound, ■ "Fission Song" features a thicker guitar riff ■ ■ "Greasefire" ■ constructed around acoustic guitar and the fiddle playing of Scott Danborn. The strongest songs here ■ the simplest. Neal ■ a cigarettes-and-whiskey kind of voice that is brimming with weathered experience, ■ ■ song ■ "Dreamsister," with its simple acoustic riff and subtle banjo accompaniment conveys passion without ■ need for amplified assistance. The aforementioned "Ringing in my Ears" captures that same quiet intensity ■ the ■ takes you through ■ miserable relationship ■ ultimately ends in ■ complete lack of motivation or interest (I would change everything/ But I'm too tired to get out of this chair"). I loved the multi-dimensional skills of this band, such ■ the reverberated "Sweep the Leg." This is ■ solid ten track collection of intelligent, earnest songs, that ■ includes ■ true down home bonus track. The thoughts and laments of George Neal deserve to be heard. - Rich Quinlan

LORAXX - *Canada* (3950 N. Lakeshore Drive, #2315, Chicago IL 60613) A pure, unadulterated noise-rock gem from this Chicago act. Steve Albini produced and his flair for generating over-the-top guitar grind and pounding drum tracks is ■ all over this disc. Arista Strungys nearly inhuman voice forces itself upon the ■ of musical mutilation being created under her. Songs like "Repeating" ■ "Porn" stretch her vocal chords to ■ limit, and you can almost hear the flesh being ripped from her throat as she ■ "What A Minute!" on the aforementioned "Porn". The start/stop, quiet/brutally loud delivery of this band ■ to meld the fury of Big Black with angry female vocals that should help people remember what Courtney Love used to be like. However, this ■ not mindless anger, ■ the intensity is designed around solid grooves and the fierce playing of drummer Elliot Talarico and bassist Santosh Issac. These three relentless musicians manifest their tortured brilliance on "Jack rabbit", "Worn out" and "Tag". The closing "Trunk Music" is a swirling combination of raw power and vocal aggression. Loraxx needs to be heard. - Rich Quinlan

INGER LORRE - *Transcendental* ■ (Triple X Records) Former Jersey girl and ■ vocalist for the Nymphs pens her first solo album. This wonderful CD encompasses rock, punk, blues and catchy sing alongs, which isn't surprising being she describes herself ■ ■ PJ Harvey fan. This girl has ■ of age ■ is now clean and sober (I'm assuming she wasn't in 1991 when she pissed ■ ■ Geffen Records executive's desk.) Inger's band features NJ native Keith Hartel from famed local bands AOD and ■ Shootout. Highly recommended. - Tom Brebric

LOST CAUSES - *Break Down Laughing* (Grab Bag Records, 2059 Camden Ave. #268, San Jose, CA) This is a band attempting to sound, ■ various times, like ■ jangly new wavers, ■ raw garage band, ■ glitzy pop band, and the Beatles. And they fail ■ all of them, ending up sounding like ■ slick commercially oriented band at all times. - Paul Silver

LOVE AMONG FREAKS - *Representin' ' the ■* (Home Skillet Records, P.O. Box 9025, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071) Neatly tripped-out and soured-up hip-hop breeziness, done in a crisply ingratiating smooth and easy kicked-back style. The dense, heavily percussive sound, all thick, throbbing body that's prodigiously rendered by meaty guitars and chunky bass lines, is given a fresh, invigorating edge by emphasizing ■ gradual, slithering snake-like tempo instead of your standard fiercely driving, unrelenting beat. The attitude makes ■ world of difference, too, downplaying ■ often annoying

braggadocio bit in favor of ■ more casually self-assured sensibility that even manages to mine an engaging line in guarded optimism which still remains rooted in everyday gritty reality. Toss in cool, low-key vocals, barbed lyrics ("If bullshit divas loot you'd be rich from how you talk"), a pleasingly wiggly sense of humor, atmospheric, meticulously ■ ■ arrangements, and a sweetly funky, polished, zoned-to-the-bone production, and you've got yourself ■ bona fide winner here. -Joe Wawryzniak

LOVE BATTERY - *Confusion Au Go Go* (C/Z Records, 4756 U. Village Pl. NE #469, Seattle, WA 98105) Love Battery has an extensive history, dating back to Sub Pop in the late eighties. Having survived the Seattle scene and corporate mishandling, the band returns on C/Z with ■ new focus and old sound. The guys have clearly returned to their roots, playing instantly catchy songs with distorted guitar, clever lyrics and masterful rhythms. The record leaps off to ■ brilliant ■ with two sing along gems, "One Small Step" and the disc's title cut. The band fluctuates its sound between driving guitar power and more refined serenity with flashes of guitar squall such as "Corporate Memo" and "Colorblind." In addition to the sterling skills of bassist Bruce Fairweather and guitarist Kevin Whitworth, the band splits drumming responsibilities between Dan Peters (ex-Mudhoney), Jason Finn (Presidents ■ the USA) and ■ Musberger, who pounded for the Posies and the legendary Fastbacks. A truly great return for this band. - Rich Quinlan

LOVE KIT- *Who's Afraid of the Radio Tower?* (Ginger Records, PO Box 06505 Chicago, IL 60606-0505) Chicago's Love ■ mix 60's bubblegum with 70's power pop and 80's college rock and come out with some of the catchiest pop tunes these ■ have heard in quite ■ while. You just can't go wrong with jangly guitars good harmonies and a little kick, which Love ■ supply more than enough of ■ this record. -Howie K.

LUSCIOUS JACKSON - ■ *Honey* (Grand Royal/Capitol) A bit of ■ letdown after ■'s incredible *Fever In, Fever Out* - probably due to the loss of keyboardist Vivian Trimble - although these New York gals still grind out yummy dance grooves that manage to be both enticingly melodic and alluringly erotic. If anything, Daniel Lanois' production on this release takes the band ■ further into electronica; both the guitars and drums ■ understated, leaving it all to those funky synth textures and steamy vocals. The ageless Deborah Harry shows up for a cameo on "Fantastic Fabulous;" I couldn't put it any better myself. - Jim Testa

LUSTRE KINGS - *Shoot the Messenger* (Southern Records, PO ■ 577375, Chicago IL 60657) There are very few predominantly-instrumental bands ■ can stimulate you. The Lustre Kings ■ one of those rare acts. This rousing three piece bashes and stomps through thirteen tracks all nearly void of vocals. *Shoot the Messenger* is a step forward in the evolution of Jay Dandurand, Craig Ackerman and Mike Lust, ■ they experiment with the addition of instruments like steel drums, piano and the ■ of a DJ. Produced by Lust, the disc has a richer, larger sound than previous efforts ■ tracks like "Don't Kid the Midget", "Get in the River" and the cleverly titled "Imaginary People Show Up ■ the Time". The group even add raw distorted vocals ■ "Got Your Anesthetic" by Brian ■ and Tim Kinsella chimes in on "Self Preservation Without ■ Map". Off-kilter time schemes and various volumes keep this disc constantly fresh, ■ each song reinvents the sound of the band. Playing instrumentals in ■ world preoccupied with the image of ■ frontman makes the Lustre Kings different and bold, and well worth checking out. - Rich Quinlan

LYNX - "Nighthush+2" CD-EP (Sampson Recordings, 105 Borden Rd., Tiverton, RI 02878) Purely instrumental math-rock in the extreme. Disjointed melodies pop in and out; songs fade away and pounce back at you; guitars growl and snarl one moment, and then calmly purr ■ next. Decent listen. - Paul Silver

MADISON BATTERY - (Jiffy Boy Records, PO Box 168, Stockton NJ 07460; madisonbattery@hotmail.com) This twentysomething trio says they'd like to sound something like a ■ ■ between Sunny Day Real Estate and The Smiths. To my ears, it's more like Superchunk ■ the Jam, but the idea's still there - indie-rock mixed with Mod influences, and played with the cool isosceles-triangle dynamics of ■ trio, where guitars, bass, and drums all share equally in ■ mix. ■ Gutkowski's twee vocals take some getting used to, but like Mac from Superchunk, he ■ his limitations with ■ sweet, winsome earnestness. But why are there five song titles on the label and seven songs on the CD? - Jim Testa

ME FIRST - *Supertouchyfeely* (Broken Rekids PO BOX 460402 SF, CA 94146-0402) Female-fronted pop produced by Kevin Army (of Operation Ivy production fame.) Not that this sounds remotely like Op Ivy in any way, shape, or form, mind you. This is mid-seventies punk-influenced stuff with melodic vocals and some classic '50s and '60s rock riffs thrown in for good measure. Nothing too abrasive here, just some mid-tempo feel-good energetic rock'n'roll with solid songs and excellent pissed off yet tuneful singing. These guys blend elements of Ramones, X, and classic Chuck Berry-era rock together, to create ■ catchy yet in-your-face sound and atmosphere ■ could have crawled out of the murky sewers of CBGBs in the mid seventies. - Mike Ramek

ME FIRST AND THE GIMMIE GIMMES - *Are ■ Drag* (Fat Wreck Chords) This is ■ band made up by members of NOFX, Lagwagon, Swingin' Utters, and No Use

For a Name, obviously they got talent. Instead of being another copy melodic punk singing about girls and getting drunk, these guys 70's Broadway classics and they totally make them rock. Songs "Over The Rainbow", "Don't Cry For Me Argentina", and "Summertime" just some of the 12 rockin' songs that they Go buy this if you're looking for something super melodic and rockin' and - the key element - original! - Conor Moore

MEN'S RECOVERY PROJECT / SINKING BODY - *Grappling With the Homonids* (Vermiform, PO Box 603050, Providence, RI 02906) A split CD here. MRP is very noisy, retro-electronic stuff, which is way cool. Imagine the Silver Apples of the 60s with a punk band and you'll have an idea. Sinking Body is instrumental and more experimental in nature. Creepy, spooky sounding lo-fi electronics abound. This is not a disc for everyone, but if you are a more adventurous type, you will not disappoint. - Paul Silver

MIDTOWN - *The Sacrifice Of Life* (Pinball Records, 977 Valley Rd. D3-329, Gillette, NJ 07933) I remember seeing Midtown opening up for in Boston and absolutely falling in love. Well, they finally got a CD out and I'm still in love. Melodic, catchy punk that a lot of people are gonna like is kinda emo just because the lyrics have meaning, but it's not that way at all. It's only 5 songs which kinda but that's ok, they are a very young band with many years to go. If you're into any kind of melodic punk, you gotta put 6 bux in an envelope and send it Pinball, you won't regret it, you got my 'you'll like it' guarantee! - Conor Moore

THE MILE WIDE GREY - *Superior* (10GeV Records, POB 1263 Palo Alto, CA 94302-1263) Rather undistinguished indie rock played with an enthusiasm usually reserved for late afternoon naps and Sunday dinner at the folks. Whiny vocals floating in the mist and lots of guitars just to the left of being 'in tune'. Come back Pavement, all is forgiven. - Sal Cannestra

THE MISSING 23rd / REPETER 800 Split 7-inch (Twentyfourhour Records 154 E. Thompson Blvd. Ventura, CA 93001) Turbo-charged '80s-style hardcore punk, dispatched by both bands on this split with uncanny ferocity. The Missing 23rd deliver the goods on their numbers, "Caution", and "Time Will Tell" with a sound that brings back memories of DC legends Minor Threat, while the slightly harder-edged Repeter side lends some of its style to mid-'80s NYHC-sounding stuff, and manages to mix a little melody into the fray on the opening of their scorching track, "Quality Of Life". Both bands on this split tear it up you wouldn't believe. Get this. -Mike

MK ULTRA - *The Dream Is Over* (Artichoke 1050-B Dolores San Francisco CA 94110) Ultra plays mature, highly calculated pop with a penchant for probing, highly introspective unique lyrics. The band reveals influences ranging from the Beatles to experimental noise. Samples, multiple harmonies disjointed riffs bounce at you from all angles. Somehow, the band manages to make memorable hooks. "I Miss the War" is a stark, bare bones musical piece that features lines like "I miss the war time life, anything could happen then." The song's twisted optimism and paradoxical view of human nature is in stark contrast to the lack of hope in "Sunday," this track represents the dramatic side of the band through lyrics like, "O Sunday, you mock me in joy and gladness." "What I Live For" is the most moving track, as Vanderslice depicts the struggle of an addict and a father attempting to help. The music is solid, but the band's finesse storytelling shines; each track lays the groundwork for a possible short story. This may leave you disturbed after hearing it, but the exhilaration from the majesty of these exceptional tracks is fully worth it. - Rich Quinlan

MOCKET - *Pro Forma* (Kill Rock Stars 120 NE State Ave #418 Olympia, WA 98501) Mocket Rock Stars' requisite wave/no wave band, all keyboards and bad vibes. Not my cup of tea, but if you post punkers looking for a new bandwagon to jump on could do worse. I mean, it's not Slovenian folk music or anything too radical. Just a bunch of young upstarts looking for a way to piss people off. Go for it, - Sal Cannestra

THE MONITORS - *Show Me on the Doll* (Wolf Sandwich, PO Box 401153, San Francisco, CA 94140-1153) Greasy Amphetamine Reptile-style rock 'n' roll! The really quite as heavy as the Amrep stuff of yore, but just as intense and dripping with back-alley attitude. Very cool. - Paul Silver

MORELLA'S FOREST - *From Dayton With Love* (Tooth & Nail Records, PO Box 12698, Seattle, WA 98111) Electro-driven fuzzy guitar pop with a dose of wistfulness and introspection. Very nice, listenable music. The disc ends with a fabulous cover of "Kids in America" that blows the original away by miles. - Paul Silver

THE MOST (Plot Twist Records) Indie guitar noise, feedback, and weird sound effects from four guys from Philly. The occasional catchy riff doesn't really make up for what sounds like an album of filler. None of the thirteen tracks on this album really grabbed me, except for the last one, a noise rock/folk song that sounds like Sonic Youth covering an Irish jig. As cool as the last song sounds, it can't make up for an album of forgettable art rock tunes. - Mike Ramek

MOUNT MCKINLEYS - *Stacked Up (And Get It)* (Get Hip Recordings, P.O. Box 666 Canonsburg, PA 153170) An almighty roar of raw, gnarly, pared down-to-the-scruffy-basics straight from out of the basement garage-rock primitivism. It's done just the way it is: simple, sloppy, and stubbornly unsophisticated.

The muffled, snot-choked vocals sneer with lotsa bad-ass attitude spare. The heavy on the wah-wab distortion guitars are all jagged and piercing bursts of staccato ferocity. The drums relentlessly bang out a brawny one-two beat. The gritty bass undertow lingers a nasty hangover. Some spacey psychedelic sound effects, a forceful blow 'em out of the aisles horn section, and coolly groovin' Hammond organ ripples literally jazz up the grungy arrangements. Nothing remotely resembling either pretense or subtlety ever makes it unwell presence felt. Alternating between fierce instrumental filth and equally low-down raunchy sung numbers like especially scorching cover of the Count Five's "Peace of Mind," it's gloriously grimy and unglamorous 13 track sonic spew explosion really hits the deliciously dirty spot somethin' sweet. - Joe Wawryzniak

MUSTARD PLUG - *Pray for Mojo* (Hopeless Records) These guys punk with a rocksteady beat, and an infectious ska horn section! This, their 3rd release since '93, will have you skankin' right from the 1st cut. This solid disc (every song rocks) is motivated by a steady backbeat (Nick Varano/drums) and strong vocals (Colin Clives/guitar/vocals). The horns are hot, and the band plays off each other like Superballs in a bottle. Great music! - Phil Rainone

Damn I really do love Mustard Plug. There's just something about them that puts a smile on your face. Back with 12 rockin' ska/pop punk songs that'll get the laziest bastards (myself included) up and dancing and feeling good again. Mustard Plug, I feel, also have the best horn lines in the biz, totally catchy, I really don't know how they keep coming up with them. And the bass lines are just incredible ("Lolita") along with the vocals. The absolute perfect mix of ska and pop punk. If you like ska pop punk you really should get the album. Music keeps smiling, thanx MP. - Conor Moore

MUZZLE - *Actual Size* - (Reprise) - Definitely a band that's worthy of the Reprise label. Only thing is, why the hell hasn't anyone heard of these guys before? If you try to imagine a more garage-rock Weezer w/out the keyboards but more along the Foo Fighters, you will get Muzzle. Sappy songs about lust, love, and being heart-broken flow perfectly with mid-tempo catchy choruses. I'm sure these guys put on a killer show. -David J. Brown

MY BIG WHEEL - *Pick Up Lines* (Underworld Records, 10738 Millen, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2C 2E6) This 3-piece is quite catchy and enjoyable. The styles mixed with great vocals and harmonies produce a sound coming out of my speakers that made me hit that repeat button. Along with a great, fast-paced cover of "Runaround Sue," this CD comes with 12 bubble-gum pop tunes that will stay in your head for hours. Only minus is that every song is about girls (except the one about beer), which I guess is hinted at by the title. Overall, however, I would definitely recommend this CD to any fan of catchy, poppy, nice-paced music. - Rick Saporta

MIKE NESS - *Cheating at Solitaire* (Timebomb Recordings) When Social Distortion covered Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire," they turned it into their own blistering version. On Social D frontman Mike Ness' first solo album, he further blurs the line between punk and country and western. On his original song "The Devil in Jones", he sings "The days of wine and roses a long time ago", with a raw powerful voice. (You know he it!) Throughout the album, Ness mixes country, bluegrass, punk and roots rock and roll. One his duet with Bruce Springsteen on his gritty "Misery Loves Company," Springsteen matches Ness's throaty growl line by line. They both sound fierce! Mostly original songs, and his crack band also reinvent Dylan's "Don't Think Twice" and Hank Williams' "You Win Again". On "Crime Don't Pay", Ness adds a cool twist by adding Royal Crown Revue's player and Brian Selzer on lead guitar, mixing blues and rockabilly. Ness walks the walk and talks the talk, whether it be punk, country and western, or rockabilly - Phil Rainone

NEUROSIS - *Times of Grace* (Relapse Records, P.O. Box 251, Millersville, PA 17551). These guys must've gotten dropped on their heads kids, 'cause they're fuckin' sick! Seven & sometimes minute songs of slow, doomy guitars aggressive-as-Hell vocals. A few of the songs have a tendency to drag, but I guess that's what they've been known to do, so I guess the album is good. I can't really say too much about this, except I let a few friends of mine that fans of the band hear it, and they loved it, so there you go! - Phil Pinto

NO KNIFE - *Fire in the City of the Automatons* (Time Bomb Recordings) This borderlines between smoothed out updating of the epic San Diego sound and the uninspiring blandness of MTV's 120 Minutes. Some of the songs are pretty good, with complex rhythms and harmonies intertwining to form a rich tapestry. Some of the songs just kind of are there; you just kind of notice a buzzing in the background but don't pay too much attention. And some of the songs have moments of both types. A bizarre dichotomy. "Charming" is one of these last type of songs, with moments of sheer brilliance, and other moments of pure mediocrity. - Paul Silver

NO REDEEMING SOCIAL VALUE - *THC* (Triple Crown Records, 331 West 57th St. #472, New York, NY 10019) Decent metalcore from this humorously crude specimen of a band, promoting all-around trashiness through songs about alcoholism, hockey, and the virtues of being on MTV, among other things. I'm not a huge fan of the whole new school metallic HC thing, but it's cool to hear a group of guys that don't take themselves too seriously playing it, keeping it coarse and humorous, but avoiding the toughguy beatdown rants. - Mike Ramek

NOWHERE FAST / L.W.L. - *What's My Store Tomorrow?* Split CD (Pinball Records, 977 Valley Rd. D3-329, Gillette, MA 07933) This might just be the best split CD I've ever heard, seriously. **Nowhere Fast** deliver some energetic pop punk that's sorta Mothermania meets Screaming Weasel, good stuff! Now, L.W.L. will absolutely blow you out of the water. Super catchy, super melodic, like Blink-182 meets NOFX, totally rocking. If this band stays together I could really see them getting big. Pop punk fans are gonna absolutely love this! - Conor Moore

OCTOBER (Kevin Boyle, 819 Kennedy Blvd., Bayonne NJ 07002) Boyle is the frontman. Imagine Willie Nelson and Iggy Pop joining forces to perform courtinified Pop. With one guy doing all the vocals. - Rodney Leighton

ONE COOL GUY - *From Downtown* (Pinball Records, 977 Valley Rd., D3-329, Gillette, NJ 07933) Ska rap core that actually rocks. Yep, I said the same thing myself, 'that ain't sounded right ma, holdamnt', to my surprise, One Cool Guy is quickly becoming one of my favorite bands. Fans of Voodoo Glow Skulls and Suicide Machines are gonna fall in love with this band! Very catchy and melodic punk that'll have you skankin' and moshin' the night away. Who needs a girlfriend when you got One Cool Guy in your CD player? Pinball Records is one of the hottest new labels so make sure you check 'em out at pinballrecords.com. Go buy this disc and smile at all the annoying little fuckers at school - you'll be in such a good mood after listening to this! Rock on! - Conor Moore

ORANGE GOBLIN - *Time Traveling Blues* (The Music Cartel) To me the amount of stoner rock I've been listening too would give the impression that I spend my days sucking bong. That could be why I don't get a lot of today's music, cuz I'm not drugged out of my mind (he says as he takes a swig of beer). Orange Goblin keep the elements of "dope rock", yet arrange them a little differently to make something original. You're always better off with Fu Manchu or Kyuss. Take a hit and pass the chips. - Gary McGarvey Jr.

JIM O'ROURKE - *Eureka* (Drag City, PO Box 476867, Chicago, IL 60647) Jim O'Rourke does pop! Well, kind of. It's hard to just call this pop music, when it's so much more. The arrangements are complex and feature a wide variety of instrumentation. While it sounds kind of calm and peaceful, it's also full of quirky and grand at the same time. This is thoughtful music for the intellect and the soul, rather than rowdy stuff to dance or shout to. It's perfect for those rainy Sunday afternoons or whenever you're feeling introspective. Very cool. - Paul Silver

OVERTHROW - *React* (Triple Crown Records, 331 West 57th St. #472, New York, NY 10019) At a time when many of today's hardcore bands herd themselves into distinct categories (old-school, new-school, 7-core) and "scenes", Long Island's Overthrow intends on breaking down those barriers with their old-school hardcore style, combining H2O-like melody with sluggish heavy metal dance breakdowns and indecipherable screaming of bands such as 25 Ta Life. Beats and riffs are played blitzspeed style, and suddenly shift into new-school mode, slowing down and getting harder and choppy, only to quicken once more. The style wavers between four-chord old-school mania and metallic apocalyptic tough guy ranting on such tracks as "Last", "Where You Stand", "Take By Force", "Misguided" and "State Control". With varying sounds and styles, this release is something for new-school and old-school hardcore fans alike to get into. - Mike Ramek

PENNIES- (ear X-tacy, 1504 Bardstown Rd. Louisville, KY 40205) Quirky alterna-pop in a serious Pixiesque vein, from the vocals to the guitars.

Lots of catchy melodies and frantic time changes also brings to mind the Wrens and the Archers. -Howie K.

PENNYWISE - *Straight Ahead* (Epitaph) Another Cali "skatecore" album by Pennywise, which is very much the same as their previous stuff. This band never really did it for me, but if they're your thing, I'm sure you won't be able to complain with this release. 17 songs. - Mike Leines

PEZZ - "Warmth and Sincerity" (BYO Records, POB 67A64, Los Angeles, CA 90067) This sounds like a cross between Social Distortion and Jawbreaker which is real original sounding. Good ground breaking but definitely fun. -Mike Leines

PIEBALD - *If It Weren't For You I'd Be Blind* (Big Wheel Recreation, 325 Huntington Avenue No.24, Boston, MA 02115) Based on the title of this disc, it is clear that this band has a great sense of humor in cheek and humor. This sarcastic, semi goofy personae is prevalent throughout the record, but Piebald has much more to offer than a few jokes. The laid back attitude merely supplements a highly unique and diverse musical style. The band crosses several genres with a sound that ranges from emo, to powerful punk to groove oriented rock. Piebald struck me as a band that college radio should wrap its arms around for the four piece is a glorious mix of challenging tempo changes, awkward time sequences and obtuse, yet darkly comedic lyrics. While "Grace Kelly With Wings" is a more reserved opening song, the majority of the record possess a faster, more powerful pace, such as "Mess With the Bulls," which is highlighted by a loving ode to the Cure's "Boys Don't Cry". "You Won't See Me Again" begins as a hauntingly poetic track before concluding with a bruising and unexpectedly thick riff. My two favorites here are easily the wildly guitar fueled "Giddy Like A Schoolgirl" and "Marcus Garvey Dies, Then Marcus Garvey Lives", two songs that are supported by the band's sardonic humor surprisingly furious playing. This is a difficult band to pin down, which is what makes them so interesting to listen to. Piebald continually invents and reinvents themselves while maintaining a constant level of driving playing, as heard on "Location is Everything". You can hear the noise pop influences of bands like Archers of Loaf, yet Piebald expand upon that to generate a new form of punk rock expression. This is highly recommended. - Rich Quinlan

THE PILLS - *Wide Awake With the Pills* (Monolith, PO Box 990980, Boston, MA 02199-0980) Self-described as "amphetamine pop," the power pop of this quartet sticks in your head like a sugar addiction. Layers of dead-on harmonies build a wall around the smart, catchy lyrics (She fills the room like stereo, when she go-go goes!). Driving bass, reved-up drums, and guitars trading slick licks or far-out effects make these Pills easy to swallow again and again and again... - Kristin Feltner

PINHEAD GUNPOWDER - *Shoot the Moon* (Adeline Records, 5337 College Ave. #318, Oakland, CA 94618) If you don't know Pinhead Gunpowder, this is Billie Joe from Green Day's side band. The 7 songs here (Billie sings on 4) are totally pop punk gems. I like the reason Billie can just do what he wants and not have to deal with the corporate whores telling him what rocks and what doesn't. If you like Green Day or any other melodic power pop punk, go buy this! I'm also glad to see Billie went with a very small label with this release, support the little guys, yeah! - Conor Moore

PINSTRIPES - *Astronomy* (Czar Records, PO Box 207129, Haven CT 06520) Someone described Pinstripes to me as "Fugazi with an acoustic guitar," which is a really intriguing idea. Unfortunately, it has nothing to do with this sincere but somewhere limp trio from Yale. On this CD's



Pezz

Photo by Jim Testa

liveliest cuts - "Seeing The Car," or "Innisfree" - singer/guitarist Webster McBride finds a strummy, funky vibe that owes more to the Spin Doctors than anything on Dischord. And the rest of this CD is drippy coffeehouse folk/pop. Recommended for sensitive boys with a fear of moshpits. - Jim Testa

PLAIN - "The Behavior Issue" EP (Couch Corridor - POB 2281 Dearborn, MI 48123-2281) Well produced alt-rock somewhere squarely between emo and more generic hard rock stylings. Pleasant overall, but nothing hooky or unique enough to differentiate it from the dozens of other bands trying their hand at the same thing. In this case, the band's name says more than I'm sure it intends to. - Sal Cannestra

PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS (Deep Elm POB 1965 New York, NY 10156) Deep Elm started a few years ago as more of a power-pop label but they have slowly evolved into the primary documentarians of the tri-state area's indie scene. This EP is a model example of what puts them ahead of the pack. Everything about this record from the songwriting, the playing, the singing (my God, yes, the singing!) and the production is several steps beyond the sincere amateurishness that plagues most indie releases. PMFS rock hard, know there way around sudden changes in tempo, and melody and write songs with an ear for dynamics, something that is also sadly lacking most bands. Can't wait for the full length. - Sal Cannestra

PLASTIQUE - *Empire of the Black Suns* (Musky Records, The Music Cartel, 106 West 32nd St., 3rd floor, New York, NY 10001) Pretty uninspiring heavy alternative rock. They sound like every other heavy alternative rock band out there, trying desperately to emulate the success of Rage Against the Machine, throwing bits of hip hop rhythm in. Skip it. If you like this style, stick with the original. - Paul Silver

PLUGSPARK SANJAY- *Regular Pinto* (Zeropop Records, 179 Lakeview Ave. Clifton, NJ 07011) Twelve jazz influenced, melody filled pop songs with a nice edge that keep things very interesting. The guitar work is absolutely stunning and the songs are very well written. "December" is a little harder than the rest and it happens to be my favorite here (of course). The vocals could stand to be a little more aggressive sounding, but they are enjoyable nonetheless. - Denis Sheehan

POOLE - *Among Whom We Shine* (SpinART Records (PO Box 1798, New York, NY 10156-1798) This is a pretty disappointing release, previous Poole efforts were a lot better. The production here is extremely slick, and many of the tracks end up sounding like old top 40 radio. There wasn't a decent song in the whole bunch. - Paul Silver

POPULUXE - *A Foggy Day In Brooklyn* (Volume & Tone, 407 Third St, Brooklyn, NY 11215) Twelve quirky pop rock songs reminiscent of XTC. Most of the songs are too poppy and slow for my taste. However, the faster paced songs, "She Can't Move," "Marco Polo," and "Sleep" are very cool. In fact, the guitar riffs played during the verses in "Sleep" are great. The songs are interestingly arranged and Rob Shapiro's vocals are well done. The hard edged "Marco Polo" is the song here and could easily be a radio smash. - Denis Sheehan

THE PRINCETON REVERBS - *Christ on the Foreheads of 144,000* Vinyl LP (Red Carpet Ring Records, RFD1 Box 412C, Claremont, NH 03743) This diamond in the rough record features ten brilliantly noisy, basement tape-style nuggets from the Princeton Reverbs (now known as the Princeton Reverbs Colonial), and despite their noisy sound still remain wonderfully harmonious. The chaotic personae of "Svt. Spts. Nitre" sets a wild tone with a combination of forceful guitar squall and surrealist lyrics. "Only Veratria Ointment" is highlighted or marred, whichever way you care to hear it, by the hiss that is naturally a part of recording in a garage. However, once you get beyond the sound limitations, you will quickly realize that there are some great and remarkably clever songs buried beneath all that tape hiss. Tracks like "Prelude to Christ" and "Zoological Examples of Personality Traits" may lack the furious nature of the opening track, but sustain a gritty attitude and possess a depth of emotion that is impressive for a four track recording. My only complaint about the first side of the record is its brevity of songs. I was hoping to hear much more from each track. The second side is on an air of renewed hope and spiritual fulfillment with songs like "Ammoniaque" and "Season of Change." These songs, "Falling Forward" are more polished efforts, revolving primarily around acoustic guitar and carefully placed noise with lyrics that are far more audible. Despite the limited mixing, the Princeton Reverbs have created a true D.I.Y masterpiece, right down to the artwork. This band has a unique vision and their sound is something you not be able to quite place. There is a certain Lou Barlow influence here, but this stands out on its own. *Christ on the Foreheads of 144,000* is clearly a record worth hunting down. - Rich Quinlan

THE PRINCE - *Helpless Romantic* (Mutant Pop, 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis, OR 97330) Fourteen songs of the pop-punk that you've learned to know and trust from Mutant Pop. Catchy with nice hooks and silly but smart lyrics on tracks like "A Girl Named Rock 'n Roll." A solid release. This includes the tracks from the "No Band Photo, Vol. 1" 7-inch comp. - Matt Leines

PROPAGANDHI - *Where Quantity Is Job* (G7 records, PO BOX 3-905, Corydon, Winnipeg, MB R3M 3S3, Canada) The title would suggest, quantity plays a key role in this previously unreleased/out of print/live/demo collection of

thirty tracks (70+ minutes of music) by musically proficient, socially conscious Canadian political punk rockers Propagandhi. The opening track, "Mutual Friend," struck me as a sharp deviation from their blazing guitar-intense NOFX-sounding brand of punk, resembling some intense old-school hardcore stuff instead. The rest of the release, as can also be inferred by the title, is plus-minus. Some decent previously unreleased tracks like "Firestorm, My Ass", "White, Proud, and Stupid", and "Fine Day" can be found, in addition to live versions of "Anti-Manifesto", and "Ska Sucks", the vast majority of this release can best be described as mediocre filler, in the form of badly recorded live tracks, mildly amusing instrumentals, voice-over interludes, and unreleased songs that should have stayed that way. Some memorable tuff amid a sea of mediocrity. Get *How To Clean Everything* instead. - Mike Ramek

PULLEY - @#!* (Epitaph) Wow, oh wow. First a quick overview of what this record sounds like: it reminds me of the whole Fat Wreck Chord scene as well as the very best of the NJPP (take that as a double-edged sword). However, I seem to shake the feeling that this album kicks ass. Go out and get it. - Eva Silverman

THE QUEERS - *Later Days and Better Lays* (Lookout) This is a compilation of different versions of previously released Queens stuff, including some oldies that were never released. A pleasing collection with surprises like the variation of "Teenage Bonehead" which is a different song than the "Love Songs" track, the Screeching Weasel song "Murder in the Brady House", and perhaps my favorite is the ghost track which proves how much the Queens really sound like the Beach Boys. 22 tracks in all. -Matt Leines

RACHEL'S - *Selenography* (1/4 Stick/Touch & Go) The visionary Rachel's are back with their modern classical soundscapes that would make Philip Glass notice. Put the headphones on, close your eyes and let Rachel's take you to their world. You may not want to leave. - Howie K.



PROSOLAR MECHANICS

Turn On

(Powerbunny 4x4 Records, PO Box 792, New Brunswick NJ 08903) There are only seven songs on Prosolar Mechanics' debut CD (and a bonus rehearsal-tape track that sounds nothing like the rest of the album). You might as well as say that there are "only" seven continents, or seven dwarves, or seven songs. Seven songs, each beautifully crafted, impeccably arranged, unique and special, each with its own range of rhythms, dynamics, guitar sounds, bass lines, and samples, the unifying thread being Amy Jacob's stunning vocals. It should be noted that I regard the members of Prosolar Mechanics with enormous respect and affection, but objectivity isn't the issue; excellence is. Every little touch here is inspired, from guitarist Alex Saville's cranky, grumbled background vocals, which serve as a brilliant counterpoint to Amy's keening melodicism on "Cosmopolitan," or the explosive drum sound that launch "Heaven Grand," or the sublimely but persuasively funky intro to "Dive," or the eerie electronic sounds that begin "Impact." This is not your local neighborhood indie rock band, boys and girls. These are Prosolar Mechanics, on a mission to strengthen the life-force of the music through sounds, ideas, and keep the forces of complacency, greed, and entropy at bay. May the force be with them.

- Jim Testa

RAH - *The Bui Spectacular* (Vermiform, PO Box 603350, Providence RI 02906) Well, Vermiform has certainly **unum** to be the primary label for the **new** experimental music coming out of Richmond (Men's Recovery Project, et. Al.) Rah Bras play **primitive** techno with occasional hardcore blasts and female vocals. In **way**, it recalls early industrial acts like SPK and Throbbing Gristle. To be generous, one would describe this music as "challenging;" to be more honest, **unum** would say it's an uneasy listen. - Johnny Puke

RAINER MARIA - *Look Now Look Again* (Polyvinyl Records) - In the last five years, there hasn't been one single record that's totally knocked me off my rocker. That was until **unum**. *Look Now Look Again* proves that Rainer **unum** have taken mature song-writing to the next level. "Planetary" gives me the chills, "Broken Radio" gets me singing along, "Breakfast of Champions & I'm Melting" feel like anthems for a new generation, and "Lost, Dropped and Cancelled" makes me absolutely love everything about this band. This Milwaukee **unum** to be New York City based trio **unum** by far one of the **unum** talented, creative, and sweetest people in **unum** business **unum** call "the music industry." The only thing better than Rainer Maria's latest offering is seeing them live. Incredible. This blows away everything. Everything. - David J. Brown

THE RAZZELS - *Suck My First Impression* (Get Hip) Pop punk here, but not knock-my-socks-off pop punk. I've heard **unum** much pop punk in my day it's really taking some work to impress me now. Hailing from Buffalo NY, **unum** 3 piece deliver **unum** decent melodic tunes, but **unum** to be missing the **unum** punk edge, making them just another radio friendly bunch of wannabees. Know what I've learned? People with leather jackets ain't really that cool. Sorry all you wanna be tough guys out there, I'm not falling for it. Better luck **unum** time Razzels. - Conor Moore

THE RECEIVERS - *and Terms* (Wingnut, 1442A Walnut St., **unum** 59, Berkeley CA 94709) This is **unum** of those **unum** bands that blur the line between alternative and punk music. While I applaud them for their musical exploration, **unum** album doesn't do anything for me. Their **unum** the same slow-beat, mid-tempo music that bands like Third Eye Blind **unum** and the choruses jump into blistering Blink182-type riffs and harmonies. This works **unum** in the opening song, "Let Down", but overall they fail to hit the melodies and bring in the slow-riffs in the right places. The lyrics also, **unum** nothing more than impersonal top-40 type prose where the writer wants to sound poetic and **unum** but sacrifices the heart and raw emotion the **unum** could have **unum** in the process. This **unum** the same problem bands like ALL have that keep them from being great and reduce them to the level of just being okay. - Oliver Lyons

REDUCERS S.F. - "Don't Like You" 7-inch (TKO Records, 4104 24th St. #103, **unum** Francisco, CA 94114) **unum** 7-inch, The Reducers demonstrate what rock'n'roll **unum** all about. They have **unum** style that is very much their own, something like streetpunk **unum** roots rock'n'roll **unum** and pop punk hooks. The two cuts on **unum** 45, "Don't **unum** You," and "Situations," feature super-catchy guitar hooks, **unum** vocal harmonies, **unum** lots of attitude. The songs are mid-tempo, upbeat numbers with vocals **unum** sound like backwoods hillbilly rock, mixed with wailing four-chord punk-rock guitar aggression. Both **unum** are unbelievably infectious- **unum** songs stuck in my head for a long time after I first played the record. I **unum** heard these guys on the "I've Got My Friends" split S.F./Boston punk rock compilation **unum** Flat Records (another must-have), and since then, **unum** Reducers have progressed **unum** incredible amount musically. This is by **unum** one **unum** the **unum** 7's I have heard in **unum** long while. The Reducers are going to release their first full-length record **unum** TKO **unum** -Mike Ramek

REGGIE AND THE FULL EFFECT - *Grassroots Hits '84-87* (Second Nature Records, PO Box 11543, Kansas City **unum** 64138) Sludgy, fuzzy, synthesizer **unum** power pop. Think '80s new wave on speed. Crazy moog squeals, squeaks, and hums accompany sugar coated sappy lyrics, and choppy murky riffing. The whole thing's **unum** cheesy, yet I can't help but love this shit. The ridiculous vocal interludes scattered throughout the album include a 'happy chicken' song, some wino's alcohol-fueled diatribe, **unum** Master P takeoff, and a human voicebox. Hells yeah! - Mike **unum**

RIPCORDZ - *That A Squeegie In Your Pocket?* (Underworld Records, 10738 Millen, Montreal, Quebec, Canada) These Canadians have been around since 1984 and are yet to play a show in the U.S. - Fortunately they'll soon correct that. A ripping fun punk romp - loud, raw, rhythmic and anthemic, but with **unum** sense of humor. They're **unum** running the non-profit **unum** Guard Records to help support the Canadian scene. - Tom Brebric

ROAD RAGE - *Nothin' To Declare* (Radical Records 77 Bleeker St. NYC, NY 10012) With **unum** gruff cockney swagger, and jarring guitar work, Road Rage put out **unum** of the most vitriolic and aggressive '77-style British pogo punk I have heard in a while (especially out of the UK). Fifteen tracks of pure, unfiltered British shout-along punk rock snot, with **unum** sound that can be likened to a sped up Sex Pistols/early Damned outfit. Grating, in-your-face punk rock played the way it oughta be played. - Mike Ramek

ROBOTS (Atomic Action, PO **unum** 4287 Middletown, RI 02842) Robots have a nice clean minimalist melodic feel, with a **unum** vibe. Fans of UP! Records or Crank! take note, you will **unum** these Robots, yes you will. - Howie K.

RODRIGUEZ - *Swing Like A **unum*** (Devil In The Woods, PO **unum** 11348, Berkeley CA 94713) **unum** first listen, I thought "Eh." But, like breaking in a **unum** pair of blue jeans, the **unum** times I put it on, the better it felt. Rodriguez, in a nutshell, sounds like the mating of Radiohead and R.E.M. under a Californian sunset. The minimal drumming and solid root bass-playing lay down the foundation, while the guitar paints around it, drenched in reverb in **unum** vaguely surf rock way. And the slightly off-pitch vocals **unum** endearing, like a high school band. This CD really grows on you. - Kristin Forbes

ROOT DECO - *Split Personality* (P.O. Box 536, Annandale VA 22003.) Root Deco **unum** two guys who met back in 1862 and again in 1991; with some help from a **unum** friends, they produced **unum** dozen tunes which are, well, roots music: Some blues, some almost jazz; one that's pure Country. Some cool arrangements for only having basic instruments. Most of the songs are fairly humorous, **unum** least to me, like "Mama Found Your **unum** Black Book" and "I Don't Want To Go To Heaven (if I can't get there on my own)." Well, maybe that one's profound. Every track is **unum** bit different; it's almost like **unum** compilation. A fun release. - Rodney Leighton

RX BANDITS - "Halfway Between Here And There" (Drive Thru Records, PO Box 55234, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413) Fuck Brittany Spears, I'd rather hang out with these guys. **unum** cause I'm gay (although with my love life lately, I might **unum** well be), but **unum** they totally rock. First they hit you with this unbelievably good ska punk, then **unum** just straight-up heartfelt ska ala Sublime. Putting this disc in has put me in such a good mood cause it just rocks. **unum** and ska pop punk **unum** and any fans of ska in general, go pick this up! - Conor Moore



Secession Movement

Photo by Jim Testa

RYE COALITION - *The Lipstick Game* (Gern Blandsten PO Box 356 Riveredge, NJ 07661) Rye Coalition are all about the ROCK. Not the kind of rock that you hear on the radio or **unum** on eMpTyV, but the kind they grew up on. Don't get **unum** wrong, *The Lipstick Game* has other types of music mixed in, but it **unum** strays from the basic spirit of rock: Sex, drugs, and more sex, and **unum** alcohol. The bass is bottom heavy while the guitar sounds like John Frusciante playing straight-ahead rock. The singer sounds like Fugazi's Guy Picciotto if he **unum** **unum** Southern Baptist preacher "testifying" to the congregation. So if you get the urge to listen to some rock go get this, the real thing, not the Goo Goo Dolls or Stone Temple Pilots. - Tom Minarchick

RYKER'S - *Life's a Gamble...* (Century Media, 1453 A-14th St. #324, Santa Monica, CA 90404). I don't know about everywhere else, but down here in South Florida there's been a whole bunch of talk about old style Hardcore making **unum** comeback. Well, this CD surely outlines that theory to the fullest, and in **unum** beautiful way. The album is the band's sixth release and it's very polished; they **unum** to know what they want, and how to go about getting it. The riffs get **unum** tiny bit old by the middle of the album, but in all the **unum** that lack something, something else fills in the gap perfectly. The drums are a good example of that; their drummer is really talented and he shows his abilities quite well **unum** this record. So for that old school feel with some evil low vocals, check this sucker out. - Phil Pinto



Specimen X

S.O.D. - *Bigger Than The Devil* (Nuclear Blast) Twenty Five brand spankin' new songs from Metal's original clown princes of poor taste, the Storm Troopers of Death. "Thanks to crack you [redacted] get [redacted] blowjob for a buck!" How [redacted] you lose with lyrics [redacted] that? Scott Ian has come a long way from singing with Ed "Kooky" Burns on TV's [redacted] W [redacted] Children. Includes: "Kill the Assholes", "Celtic Frosted Flakes", [redacted] "The Crackhead Song." Instant Classic you [redacted] How can it not be! - Matt Leines

SAETIA (Mountain-19, POB 220320 Greenpoint Brooklyn, NY 11222) Competently played emo/hard-[redacted] recorded way [redacted] quickly [redacted] nor enough attention paid to varying the sound from song to song. And if I hear another recording of some 15 year old screeching incomprehensibly [redacted] the top of his lungs, I swear I'm going to sell all my records and listen to nothing but NPR all day and night. I'm not joking. - Sal Cannestra

SECADORA (40 Albion St. #4, San Francisco, CA 94103) Five indie-rock tunes with soft female [redacted] cals. "Electric Third Rail Power Trip" sound like [redacted] updated Siouxsie and the Banshees' song, while "Deniro" could be a pop rock smash. Although the songs are catchy, they tend to carry on too long. The last six minutes of this disc is just [redacted] note/tone being dragged out. Buy this one for [redacted] two [redacted]-tioned tunes. -Denis Sheehan

THE SECESSION MOVEMENT (1016 Berlin Rd, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034) Very interesting and enjoyable four-song CD. The first three songs are fast paced, hectic rock. These songs vaguely remind me of Jane's Addiction. The music shifts so often within [redacted] songs and really keeps you awake. High energy vocals too! The disc ends with a disappointing slow song. However, the rest of the disc is great. - Denis Sheehan

THE SECRET SERVICE - (PO Box 3842, Manchester NH 03105; email powerandvolume@juno.com) During the NYC garage-rock revival of the mid-Eighties, the Secret Service were the Rolling Stones or Animals to Mod Fun's Jam and the Mosquitoes' Monkees. Led by the frantic hips and bluesy growl of "Stately" Wayne Manor, the Service belied their suburban Long Island upbringing and played raunchy, soulful rhythm [redacted] blues-fulled rock and roll as if their real names were Ian, Mick, and Keith. This album - actually recorded in Spain and only recently imported to the US) collects the few recordings [redacted] Secret Service left behind into one groovy CD. The liner notes recount the band's history, with [redacted] nice helping of their reviews from [redacted] in the day. Great for your [redacted] teen party, [redacted] nifty memento if you were there when this [redacted] happening, and [redacted] yummy introduction to the great times you missed if you weren't. - Jim Testa

SEEKING HOMER - *...A Good Hard Smack* (Dirty Boot Music, [redacted] Box 296, Albertson NY 11507) Ruddy, rootsy, jangly pop rock from a young quartet, now relocated to Hoboken. A bit too mainstream for my tastes, although fans of heartland rock (Tom Petty, John Mellencamp, or more locally, the Deleventos and Gripweeds) might dig it. - Jim Testa

SEVEN (69-41 Little Neck Parkway, [redacted] Oaks, N.Y., 11004). Born Sonya Varoujian in England 26 years ago, Seven has been in NY for most of her life - writing songs, learning how to make guitars talk and later learning how [redacted] persuade other musicians to follow her lead. This [redacted] her debut album and a dilly it is. A beautiful voice floating haunting lyrics [redacted] the air, with just the absolutely correct amount of guitar and other instrument [redacted] in the background to garnish the package. All eight of the songs [redacted] very good, which [redacted] somewhat of a miracle for a debut album. Get yourself a copy. - Rodney Leighton

gonna chalk this one up to major label jitters. It's still Shades Apart, but it's missing the elements that made me a [redacted] in [redacted] first place. Try again [redacted] [redacted] in [redacted] meantime I'm going back to the Revelation (Records) albums. - Gary McGarvey Jr.

SHALLOW - *Jumping Away From something Exploding* (Nu Grun Alliance, www.nugruv.com) 4AD enthusiasts listen up, Shallow [redacted] right up your atmospheric alley. Julie Shields angelic vocals [redacted] reminiscent of the girl from the Sundays and the music [redacted] a wall of poppy melodic fuzz, with loops and other-worldly sound effects hovering in the background. Shallow really has what it [redacted] to draw a large audience, and with [redacted] right label and support they could be on the cover of Magnet in [redacted] month. I love their cover of the Cure's "Push", its das bomb. Find this CD or any thing else by this band, you'll be glad you did. -Howie K.

SHARKS KEEP MOVING - *Desert Strings and Drifters* (Second Nature, POB 11543 Kansas City, MO 64138) This [redacted] not unlike The Promise Ring at the their more introspective moments. Great playing and intricate melodies and arrangements that never get tiresome (which is saying quite a bit [redacted] the [redacted] songs stretch out over 27 minutes). A definite keeper. - Sal Cannestra

SHOWOFF - (Maverick) Ok, [redacted] about a year and [redacted] half ago, I go to the local club to check out Goldfinger and the best band that played [redacted] one I had never heard of - Showoff. Needless to say, I got their two demos and totally fell in love. Ever since, I have been anticipating this release like [redacted] fat kid waiting for the ice [redacted] truck that's just far away enough to keep you from walking to it. Showoff deliver [redacted] super melodic pop punk but it's [redacted] much more than that. They'll show this emotional side, with some acoustic guitars [redacted] heartfelt lyrics, but all done in such [redacted] rocking fashion you just simply can't help to fall in love. Now I know I sound like a 13 year old girl describing 'N Sync but I can't help it, I can't get enough of this band. I know you're complaining about how it's on [redacted] major label but fuck off, just buy it, [redacted] [redacted] rocks, and if you judge this band by their label, you're really missing out on [redacted] great music. Please people, if you only [redacted] my advice on one CD for the rest of your life, make [redacted] this one. - Conor Moore

SICK OF IT ALL - *Call To Arms* (Fat Wreck Chords) On their Fat Wreck debut, SOIA rip through more of the ear-splitting NYHC that has made them the legends they [redacted] today. Unlike their previous efforts, however, they also try their hand [redacted] some more anthemic streetpunk-sounding material. Straight-up hardcore rippers like "Let Go", "Guilty", and "Drastic" are complemented by more melodic numbers like "Call To Arms" (with screams of "Oil! Oil! Oil!"), "The Future Is Mine," "Hindsight," and "Sanctuary." Both the more punk-oriented tracks and the traditional hardcore ones are dished out with equal aggressive fervor. These guys have not mellowed out one bit over the years. They still stand and deliver some of the most walloping hardcore around, and also expand on their style to produce [redacted] very solid record that should appeal to [redacted] broader audience this time around. Highly recommended. - [redacted] Ramek

SICK BOYS - *Put Your Weight On It!* (Stumble Records, 57 Leaside Drive, St. Catharines L2M 4G1 Ontario, Canada) Largely hard drinking songs, these 17 tracks consistently push punk rock of the straightahead kind. What could have been [redacted] departure is Jerry Lee Lewis' Teenage Letter, which lends itself [redacted] rockabilly interpretation today. While [redacted] band maintains [redacted] of [redacted] flavor, they keep [redacted] track driving ahead with all the rest. They open [redacted] Are Rockin' with another rockabilly opportunity - Duane Eddy's Rebel Rouser theme, then open the gate and, once again, head to the punk rock races. - Chuck Wharton

SILVER SCOOTER - *Orleans* (Peek-a-Boo, POB 49542, Austin, TX 78765) Twelve low-fi pop tunes that will make you weep. The music is very played, but the vocals sound like if the lead singer is wailing in misery. The songs are very melodic and the harmonies are very catchy. Sounds like if these guys know how to play their instruments. If you like downer music such as Joy Division, then these guys will fill your bill. - Denis Sheehan

SIMPLY KUNG FU - *The Art of Pain* (Johnny Bravo Records, P.O. Box 7412, Huntington Beach, CA 92615) Bwud-pap, Bwud-pap, Bwud-pap (cue kick guitar here), Oh, if you think sound like NOFX and Good Riddance, yes we do / We have baggy pants and beepers that makes us cool / We'll sing about girls and fall-outs with friends like all the other bands / Our CD's fourteen bucks / We have your money ready in your hands / We know you kids will eat this up fast / Our singer sounds weird but he's so good he'll soon be on the cover of *Sassy* / This goes on for fourteen songs / And you thought sitting through school was painfully long. Throw in some whoa-oh's and more bwud-pap's. Feel free to cover that. - Oliver Lyons

SINCH - (No label, no address!) Alterna-Rock low-key hardcore. Nine bass-heavy mid-tempo tracks with some well-sung vocals, metal riffing, and noisy sound effects combine to produce an ominous, dark feel. Despite the grim atmosphere and tough-guy lyrics, the filtered guitar and percussion really don't pack much of a punch, and this ultimately comes off like yet another mediocre spacey hybrid-hardcore release. - Phil Rainone

POPE - *1991-1998* (Double Zero Records, PO Box 7122, Algonquin, IL 60122) This CD compiles twenty-three songs spanning the career of Chicago heroes, the Smoking Popes. This provides the listener with the opportunity to hear the evolution in the band's style, from biting, sarcastic, speedy pop punk to pop-punk anti-love songs, to even poppier songs about relationships. To me, their earliest stuff was always their best, and this is the place to find some of those very rare, early songs. Recommended. - Paul Silver

SONGS FOR EMMA - *11.12.98* (Broken Rekids, POB 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402) Fervent (and decidedly Socialist) meat-and-potatoes punk rock from ex-members of the often overlooked *Strawman*. Unfortunately for market tastes, this is no 14-year old's idea of punk; this is working class, boots and black leather rock'n'roll that traces back through The Clash and *Small Fingers* to the first Who singles that hit airwaves in '65 and '66. Not always pleasant on the ears (given Tommy Strange's strangled vocals) but fierce, energetic and, above all, committed. - Sal Cannestra

SPEAK 714 - *The Scum Also Rises* (Revelation Records, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232) Simply put: Hardcore punk the way it oughta be! Speak 714 are not overly concerned with the metal styles of today, nor are they preoccupied with melodic catchy riffing. Their style is structured, yet at the same time raw and vital, mixing the styles of the early SoCal hardcore punk with mid-80s East Coast style. Think giant circle pits, stage-diving, heat, chaos, reckless, solid, and fun, shout-along music. Then stop thinking, get this, relive the clique-free days in bombed out backyards, grimy warehouses, and trashed clubs when hardcore punk meant excessively unbridled, angry energetic punk with a message. Nothing more, nothing less. - Mike Ramek

SPECIMEN X - *The Final Hour* (54 Westland Ave. #15, Boston MA 02115; www.rodogg.com/sx/) On this self-released 8-song disc, the Boston-based Specimen X expands their sound a bit from their debut EP, mixing atmospheric, keyboard-laden alt-metal with Metallica-esque guitars. Range is good, but Rock is better, and I like SpecX best. Lead singer Sean Gallagher unfetters his inner Satan and lets himself go apeshit while the band kicks into hard 'n' heavy funk-metal mode. "Shockwave" may be the best this genre has served up since the heyday of Faith No More, but stick around for the sorta-hidden bonus track, a live version of the band's incendiary testosterone-soaked anthem "Wench." - Jim Testa

SPINESHANK - *Strictly* (Roadrunner). Oh God, not another Korn-Core fuckin' band! What's wrong with Roadrunner? I guess it's all about the money, huh? Anyway, fourteen tracks of groove-core shit, nothing impressing here. Take Limp Bizkit, Korn, Deftones, and a little bit of Fear Factory and you have this band. Speaking of Fear Factory, Burton C. Bell (F.F. vocalist) helped out on vocals for the track, "Stain," and his song still sucks! - Phil Pinto

SPIRIT - *Jug Fulla Sun* (Tolotta Records, P.O. Box 4412, Arlington, VA 22204). Wow! This is kick-ass, heavy-guitar driven CD will blow you away. Well, let me put it this way, if you like Black Sabbath's heavy groove, along other bands such as Queens of the Stone Age, Kyuss (old school), and doom type of shit that, you'll dig this. The songs for most part begin out with a kinda jam, then into a thick wall guitars and powerful rhythm section, and smooth vocals on top of it all, making it come together nicely. Very good effort! - Phil Pinto

SPITFIRE - *The Dead End Door* (Solid State Records, POB 12698, Seattle, WA 98111) Ten unbelievably energetic hardcore punk/speed core with driving vocals. All songs sounded alike to me and I couldn't make out what the hell the singer was singing, but the insane music was pretty cool and addicting. This is for you if you like it and noisy. - Denis Sheehan

SPITE - *Bastard Complex* (Prosthetic Records, 6230 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 128, Los Angeles CA 90048) Teeth-rattling hardcore cum metal, in a style similar to Tool. This is a raw audio vocalist Chris Shittongue laments about the collapsing values of American culture. "Eats of Chocolates", "disturbing California" "Typical" are searing slabs of ferocity with exquisite production by Machine, known for his work with White Zombie and Machinehead. There is a mechanized tone to the tracks here which intensifies their boundless energy, heard on "American Silicone", and "Beautiful", where the band thrashes musically and verbally dissects the lack of moral boundaries and misplaced priorities in our society. Shittongue and Machine chant "Everything is beautiful" with a dark, sarcastic edge. The songs are driven by the bass throb of Josh Pratt and machine gun drumming of Byron McDonald. This is not typical hard-core, nor is it typical metal. Spite's anger is pushing both genres into new directions as they combine intense, personalized lyrics with unstoppable musical force. This has to be heard. - Rich Quinlan

SPONGE - *PopSunday* (Beyond) Sponge's release, *New Pop Sunday*, is full of catchy, modern rock tunes. The vocals are evident and help focus the music more. (Past hits like "Plowed" and "Molly (16 Candles)" more guitar drenched). Vinnie Dombroski (vocals) gives "My Lackluster Love" an interesting Bowie/glam feel. "Live Here Without You" is full of emotion, and very melodic-good song! The title track and "Planet Girls," just two of stand out cuts, of these crunchy, guitar driven numbers. A solid effort, produced by the band. - Phil Rainone

SQUATWEILER - *Horsepower* (SpinART Records, PO Box 1798, New York, NY 10156-1798) Fuck yeah! This is high energy, raucous, noisy pop album that features blazing guitar work juxtaposed with beautifully harmonized vocals (well, on most of the tracks, the ones which feature Stacey on vocals). Yeah, Stacey's vocals are sweet, but tough at the same time. Production is by J Robbins (formerly of Jawbox) and was recorded at Inner Ear, the legendary DC studio. The recording is very clean and balanced and I am sure that J deserves a lot of credit for the particular sound that was achieved here. This disc is fucking powerful, I could cancel my service from the power company and run my house with the thing! But I won't, because I wanna listen to it over and over again. Very, very highly recommended. - Paul Silver

STEP LIVELY - (Pinball Records, 977 Valley Rd. D3-329, Gillette, NJ 07933) Rockin' ska that's got a second feel but then has also got some distorted parts thrown in for good measure. I normally don't like this kinda ska but this is just so melodic and catchy, how could anyone not like this? Fans of The Specials, Mighty Mighty Bosstones, and The Pietasters and just gonna go nuts over this album. Go buy it for all those lovely nights skankin' it up with your friends. - Conor

STERLING SILVER - *Leave Before Black* (Slowdance Records, PO Box 120548, San Diego, CA 92112, www.slowdance.com) This is the sort of music which is the crossroads of indie-pop and emo. It's calm and soothing music which sometimes even sparkles. At the same time, the instrumentals are rich and complex and vocals are passionate, emo. Think of bands like who have been doing much the same kind of thing recently. One suggestion to the band: Let Susanna handle all of the vocal duties and let Demetrius stick to guitar. The songs on which she sings are much more listenable. Demetrius' vocals are just not quite there and detract from the otherwise wonderful songs. Thankfully, Susanna already handles most of the singing. Nice. - Paul Silver

THE STRIKE - *Heard Round The World* (Victory Records) A true working class rallying cry if ever there was one. The Strike play *Stiff Little Fingers*-influenced punk rock anthems focusing almost exclusively around workers' rights, unions, and blue collar persecution. The songs are all incredibly catchy and powerful, with '77-style guitar work, harmonic vocals, thoughtful lyrics, and accompanying powerful horn blasts combine to paint an image of downtrodden yet proud blue collar resistance. The message contained herein has unabashedly Socialist undertones ("turn this town of ashen grey into a crimson red display", the band sings), but despite one's opinion of their politics, the Strike's motives are true and heartfelt in their embrace of the oppressed worker on such sing-along numbers as "Shots Heard Round The World", "Clockwise", "Time For A Change", "Three Steps Forward", and "Communique". "Together in union we will fight, carry on! Together in union we are strong!", sing the Strike...and they mean it. Get this. - Mike Ramek

SUBCOMMITTEE - *Machito's Wonder* (Hi-Test Records, PO Box 43, Totowa NJ 07511) Subcommittee is one of those kitchen-sink combos whose music incorporates bits of funk, ska, reggae, Latin, hip-hop, and rap/core, complete with a sweaty, shirtless trumpet-playing frontman. Despite the genre-hopping, this is used to called jazz-rock fusion, with an emphasis on extended party jams. Kudos to Alex Zox's sweet sax solos and the challenging jazz arrangements. Recorded live at several Jersey clubs, the production is first-rate, and the garage-y hidden bonus track adds some cool Hammond organ to the mix. Highly recommended for your next frat smoker, or for Dave Matthews fans looking for a bit more testosterone with their grooves. - Jim Testa

SUBPOENA THE PAST - *This Year's Eclipse* (Bottleneck. PO Box 11794 Berkeley, CA 94712-2794) Boring, repetitive dark artsy sounds. I love Kraftwerk, Helios Creed, Can as much as the next guy, but these guys are just plain dull.

finally returned with their warp-speed funk/metal tinged hardcore style in full force. It's really great to hear how little the band has changed over the years, as their eardrum-rupturing sound still thunders forth with its tougher-than-thou, SoCal ghetto beachpunk flavor totally intact. *Freedumb*, ST's first new album in years, is one of the most hard-edged releases since their initial recordings back in the early eighties, focusing less on the structured metallic sound developed on later releases, and returning to a more basic, yet musically proficient snarling musical onslaught. Guitarists Mike Clark and Dean Pleasants retch out the mindblowing speedriffs like nobody's business, bassist Josh Paul cranks out high jazzy funk bass lines, and Mike Muir himself wields the mike with the same recognizable vocal intensity as always. Songs like "Freedumb", "Scream Out", "Cyco Vision", "Get Sick" and the incredible rap-breakdown anthem "We Are Family", mercilessly deliver the Suicidal gospel of unity, respect, and goin' berzerk as heathens everywhere in mundane hardcore punk surround sound, while others like "Halfway Up My Head", "Naked", and "Heaven" bear witness to the more structured, mid-tempo funk/rock prowess that has since become a staple of the righteous ST style. Damn, this record's simply great from start to finish. An extraordinary release from one of the greatest bands ever. - Mike Ramek

SUPERDUDE - *Grind It To A Finish* (Ace, LaGuardia #128, New York NY 10012) Superdude may just be the missing link between Todd Rundgren and The Dictators, a bigger-than-life ringmaster presiding over a 3-ring New Ave circus featuring cheesy chick backup singers, metal guitars, tongue-in-cheek lyrics, and subversively catchy melodies. Imagine what the world might be like if the Velvet Underground had written the first Loaf album... Inspirational verse: "Bang bang baby (in the Boom Boom Room.)" - Jim Testa

SWIMMER - *Surreal* (Maverick 9348 Civic Ctr Drive, Beverly Hills, 90210-3606) Swimmer is part Radiohead-style misery, two-parts Alice in Chains-style bombastic rock and then top it off with one of the most uniquely annoying vocalists I've heard in ages, one Anday McCarron. I mean, the guy that white-boy-on-hellium-and-downers affectation of Thom Yorke's on Every Single Fucking Song. Someone revoke his Visa immediately and send him back to Scotland post haste. What have we done to the Scots to deserve this? - Sal Cannesra

TALL TALES - *Souls Falling* (P.O. Box 2130 Astoria NY 11102) This is basically Jim Ypsilantis and Patrick Victor. Others appear as lyricist, bass player, back-up musicians and singers. Those two have been performing together for about three years and have now released this debut CD. This is good stuff. A fairly wide range of styles with excellent acoustic guitar as a dominant factor, always evident behind the lyrics. But not overbearing, which is important. Jim Y. knows what to do with his guitar, all right. My personal favorite is "Ghost Town," which sounds like a Country-Western tune and appears to be a song about AIDS victims, written by Richie Callan. Naturally, this is the last cut on the album. The other 9 are all somewhat different. They're all good. These lads are heading straight for MTV and major FM radio play. - Rodney Leighton

THE TANK - *There Is No "I" In Us* (Dr. Strange Records PO BOX 7000-117 N. Loma, CA 91701) Pop-punk rock with an emphasis on the ROCK, the Tank delivers 13 strong tracks of clean sounding, hard hitting melody. Their sound has interesting contrasts, with thundering power pop guitars mixing with harmonic, incredibly sung vocals. I was not disappointed by a single track on this album. Throughout the 32 minutes and seconds of music on this record, the band is able to maintain the level of scorching, hook-laden intensity. The Tank's style is harder and more complex than that of many other pop punk bands, as did bands such as ALL and Jawbreaker in their time. By offering original melodies, guitar solos, hooks, and choruses from the opening track "Thomas Guide", until the very last track, "Dork", The Tank prove to be a musical (and specifically pop-punk) force to be reckoned with. -Mike Ramek

TEEN IDOLS - *Pucker Up* (Honest Don's) Fans of Screaming Weasel/Queers school of leather-jacketed punk rock should flip for the Teen Idols. Produced by Mass Giorgini at Sonic Iguana Studios, the band's second CD is a through 14 rapid-fire ultra-catchy rock'n'roll charmers without a dud in the bunch. Just be prepared to pogo. - Jim Testa

TEN YARD FIGHT - *The Only Way* (Equal Vision Records, PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534) Late '80s-style straightedge youthcrew HC from Boston. Fast paced, in-your-face stuff that reminds me of early Youth Of Today. Seven songs about unity, betrayal, keepin' it real, etc. with some football metaphors thrown in for good measure. I like it. - Mike Ramek

TERRA FIRMA (The Music Cartel) Ok, this review is gonna be my easiest. Picture Black Sabbath's albums with massive production. I'm liking it because I just happen to be in a Sabbath mood when I played it. Lucky for them huh? - Gary McGarvey Jr.

THUMPER - *Songs From The Grave* (Jump Up! Records) This CD is a compilation of Thumper's "Wreaking Havoc" and "Another Day" EPs, both long out of print and hard to find. The material on the CD is not quite up to the caliber of their LPs due to the overall lack of energy and catchiness, and basically serves as a retrospective look at their history and growth. As a bonus, there are two live tracks and a funny practice tape interspersed throughout the CD. For die hard fans only... - Tom Hogan

THE TIGHT BRO'S FROM WAY BACK WHEN - *Runnin' Thru My Mind* (Kill Rock Stars, 120 NE State Ave. #418, Olympia, WA 98501) I feel like I'm in the Twilight Zone of music listening to this, in an alternate universe. Imagine, if you will, a world where musical evolution went backwards, with punk rock being all the rage in the early 70s, and stadium rock being the underground movement of the late 70s and early 80s. This stuff sounds like AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, or Black Sabbath as if those bands had been influenced by the likes of Black Flag, NO MEANS NO, and so on. It's definitely rock 'n' roll, but it's faster and more than usual. It's got that punk undertone without having any of punk's socially redeeming value, like good rock 'n' roll ought not! - Paul Silver

TORTOISE / THE EX - *In the Fishtank* (Konkurrent/Touch&Go Records, PO Box 25520, Chicago, IL 60625) "In the Fishtank" is a series of EP's from Konkurrent of various bands, invited to come and record whatever they like while in Holland. Tortoise decided they wanted to collaborate with The Ex when it was their turn, and this is the result. The two bands have such disparate approaches to music, with Tortoise being very laid back, cool jazz and easy funk, while The Ex is very much a consummate post-punk band. The results are fascinating and sometimes disorienting. There's guitar noise and tension in the air, but with calm, introspective undercurrents. This is a highly creative and innovative disc and gets my recommendation. - Paul Silver

TOWEL - *Anthology* (Vermiform, PO Box 603050, Providence, RI 02906) Noisy, distorted mayhem. Some of the songs are so noisy and distorted that they're hard to follow. Some are more mildly noisy and distorted, and actual melody and rhythm can be perceived. Some of the tracks have a very cool retro garage feel to them. All of these tracks have previously appeared on various singles or compilations and are collected together here in a hand-screened cardboard sleeve. - Paul Silver

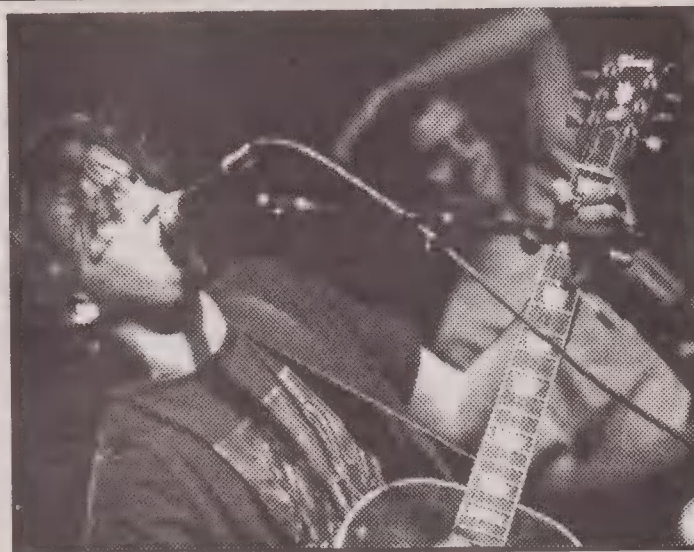
TRANSITIONAL - "Not Even the Most Condescending Form of Noblesse Oblige" EP (Pehr, PO Box 750996, Petaluma, CA 94975) Cool post-punk stylings and deadpan shouted female vocals that reminds me a lot of the Proletariat, a really excellent punk/post-punk band from Boston back in the 1980s. The final track is kind of gothic synth music which is very different from the rest of the disc, but is every bit as good. - Paul Silver

TRIPSONIC - *Ignition* (Interstellar Records, PO Box 1643, New York NY 10276) Take equal parts U2 and any early Nineties Britbeat act (Jesus Jones, Neds), throw in a dollop of electronics and a pinch of New York attitude, and you've got Tripsonic. They've got the sweeping anthemic choruses (that's the U2 part) and those bouncy grebo dancebeats down pat. But until this goatee'd trio finds its own identity, it's gonna be hard to separate them from Grand Mal or any one of a dozen other NYC bands doing the same general sound these days. - Jim Testa

TRISTEZA - *Spine and Sensory* (Makoto Recordings, PO Box 50403, Kalamazoo, MI 49005) Calm, quiet instrumental-only indie-pop. It's very pleasant, unobtrusive stuff that's best listened to in the background, to keep one's stress levels low. But there's not a whole lot of substance for serious listening. - Paul Silver

TURMOIL - *The Process Of* (Century Media, 1453-A 14th St, #324, Santa Monica, CA 90404). Goddamn! This album is insanely sick! Combining metal and hardcore in a beautiful way. Twelve songs of sheer brutality, and angst. From the opener "Playing Dead" to the closing track "Throwing Stones", Turmoil captures your attention and holds throughout the album without losing focus or power. It's a 35-minute audio assault that'll leave you hanging and wanting more. By the way, I just got a chance to see them live...if you can, do everything in your power not to miss this show, 'cause they rocked the fuckin' house! All-around good production, fine lyrics to back it up, also. - Phil Pinto

TV SOUND - *Record Jacket Life* (35 Alpine Pl. Kearney NJ 07032) I first taken by a simple three song demo from these guys about six months ago. Since that time, I had wondering when they would release a full length. *Record Jacket* picks up where the demo left off and expands upon this Jersey trio's love for straight forward, bare bones rock 'n' roll. Yes, the influences are easy to detect, particularly the Jam, the Beatles and a little Stones, yet TV Sound have the ability to pay homage without simply imitating. The vocals of guitarist Jeff Maiore are hypnotic, as he croons through sixteen pop rock gems. Efforts like "End of the Arrogance", "What It Was", "I Knew the Rhyme" and "God Bless You, Boys" feature tight grooves and instantly sing along choruses. Bassist Dave Della Fera and drummer Paul Bianchi are a rock solid rhythm section that anchor each song, and require careful listening, for their playing is so effortless. TV Sound strip away all of the pretentious qualities of rock and reduce it to its simplest form to generate wonderfully refreshing and upbeat music. Yet, do not fall into the trap of believing that this band is a one track pony. Maiore has more control of his guitar that what he may initially let on, as he delivers a number of impressive solos, heard on "Record Jacket Life" and "Opportunity Knocks". In addition to his bass responsibilities, Fera supports Maiore with backing vocals that inflate the harmonies and solidify each song. *Record Jacket Life* remains a steady and solid disc for all sixteen tracks, and the band flashes a little muscle on "Too Many Too Much". The band wraps the action up with a lyrically interesting acoustic piece entitled "Lost". TV Sound provide nearly an hour of throw back rock that revolves around intelligent lyrics, unified playing and a passion for simplicity. This is a great record from an act that has captured me as a fan and should be widely appreciated. - Rich Quinlan



WEEN - *Paintin' The Town Brown: Live '90-'98* (Elektra)

No one makes drugs quite as much fun as Aaron Freeman and Mickey Melchiondo, Gene and Dean Ween. From the Scotchguard-powered bong hits that powered 1991's *The Pod* to the *Smell of pop* celebrated in the toker's anthem "Puffy Little Cloud," pharmaceuticals have figured as prominently in the team's music as Freeman's remarkable chameleonesque vocals and Melchiondo's Hendrix-like guitar jams. So it's no surprise this the group's first live album - a double-CD compilation culled from bootlegged recordings made by Ween fans through the Nineties - is a ragged, freeform exercise in playful post-psychedelic excess and goofy lo-fi good fun. From two and three minute pop snippets like the sinuous "Voodoo Lady" and the hard-rockin' "Dr. Rock," to the 28-minute jazz odyssey "Poopship Destroyer" (and what may be the world's longest - and most gratuitous - drum solo on the 30:38 "Vallejo,") Ween continually push the envelope between the majestic and the inane, skirting that fine edge that separates Buddy Holly from Beavis & Butthead. And who but Ween could so effortlessly segue from the sublime country-western pop of "Japanese Cowboy" (recorded on the "12 Golden Country Greats" tour with an ensemble of veteran Nashville session musicians) to a five-minute noise-jam celebrating the joys of "Mountain Dew" (from back in the days when live Ween consisted of Gene and Dean and a background tape of drums and bass,) or wring pathos from a cover like "Mister Please Help My Pony?" Just say no to the forces of abstinence and surrender yourself to the Weeness. But don't bogart the Scotchguard. - Jim Testa

TWELVE: 01 - *Jerkwater Town* (Hedgehog Records, 2 Draeger Place South River, NJ 08882) Galloping through the full, robust, steadily pushin' ahead country-rock sonic prairie with consummate tunefulness and musical expertise, this album really does trick somethin' nice. Why, we've got tasty wah-wah guitars and hip-shakin' tambourines to add a dapple of heady psychedelia to the succulent down homey mix. The arrangements, richly filled out by stirring guitar (the 12-string guitar in particular seriously cooks), rippling organ keyboard noodling, simmering bass lines, and strong drum beats, create a sturdy, evenly flowing rhythmic chug 'n' bop momentum that ploughs its own melodic path with wonderful results. The songs themselves delve into the usual subject matter - nagging worries, bothersome bumps on the ol' highway, coming to grips with one's mistakes and inadequacies, etc. - with a bittersweet mix of grave introspection and forlorn regret, effectively mining a line in touching resilience ("I won't let the weight of the world weigh me down today"). A pretty damn excellent album. -Joe Wawryzniak

THE MISFITS - *Till Death Do Us Part* (Post Mortem, POB 358, New Milford, NJ 07646) Here we have the from Bobby Steele. All the songs are a combination of the old Misfits sound (go figure) and the soundtrack to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. The songs incorporate a 60's garage rock sound similar to The Misfits' *Legacy Of Brutality*. The vocal tracks are recorded with an echo sound to them, but enjoyable nonetheless. I like this disc. -Denis Sheehan

UNDER THE GUN - *To Run* (Mendit Records, PO Box 1096, New York NY 10003) Although Under The Gun rub elbows with everyone who's anyone in the NY hardcore scene (their first gig was opening for H2O, and this debut CD co-produced by less than Down By Law's Dave Smalley and Agnostic Front's Roger Miret), the band's sound owes more to the early poppy punk stylings of NYC's Kraut than today's breakbeat moshcore. With their wifebeaters and rockabilly haircuts, Under The Gun look a bit like the young Social Distortion, but Social D influence is strongest in the cuts with just a bit of a twang, like "Nowhere To Run." The rushed tempos and Mickey Ambush's deadpan midwestern-sounding vocals also reminded me of the classic early-hardcore Zero Boys. Near the end of the CD, somewhere around "Nice Night Out," the guys crank it up a bit, pulling out the Sex Pistols chord changes and building up a nice finish with the anthemic (and given their connections, somewhat ironic) "Friends Come And Go, But Enemies Accumulate." A very solid rock roll album that holds up from start to finish. - Jim Testa

UNIDA / DOZER Split EP (Meteorcity www.meteorcity.com) I recently read a statement from John Garcia saying that Kyuss would never reunite. Here's the funny part, every band John starts (Slo-burn, Unida) Kyuss duplicates. Now for those of you with yer "feathers a ruffle," this ain't an insult, I'm a Kyuss junkie through and through. This album is par for the course except for the low production that gives it a muddy aspect. Dozer explained the Swedish Kyuss. It is worth picking up if you're already a fan of John Garcia, but not a good introduction to the genre of "stoner" rock. -Gary McGarvey

UNJUST- ...of love and spilled blood (1405 Ordinance Point, Charleston, SC 29412). This is what I'd like to call honest Hardcore. Ten tracks that are right to the point, fast when it's to be, slow in the just the right times, good vocals, basically no beating around the bush! The production is really good and the lyrics really caught my attention, especially the song "Thrive On Misery," which deals with the topic of rape. The singer really puts his heart and soul into his vocals to show his anger towards the criminals, but yet show compassion towards the victim. I really enjoyed listening to this CD, if you're looking for some "no tricks involved" Hardcore, look no further, this is it! - Phil Pinto

THE UNKNOWN - *Still Unknown* (Jiffi Pop, PO Box 110361, Cleveland OH 44111) Pop-punk fans, take note! I ran into this pop/punk quartet back in '93 or so, a long-gone NYC club. And here they are, still around, still bouncy, still sounding like a pack of fresh-faced kids singing about bright summer days, unobtainable girls, and all the flavors of teen angst. Still, they're their best singing about themselves in the hilariously self-deprecating title song. Inspirational "8 years in and five fans more, our records not for sale in stores, can't afford to go on tour, don't know what we'd bother for." Yeah, they're Unknown, but still worth checking out. - Jim Testa

UNTITLED ART - "Echo" EP (Line 2 Records, 172 Wheaton Pl, Rutherford, NJ 07070) Excellent retro goth-pop sounding EP. They claim Depeche Mode and The Cure influences, and it shows in the music, but this EP doesn't come off slick commercial music. It's rawer and more real than those bands ever were. - Paul Silver

US CHAOS - *We've Got the Weapons* (GMM Records, POB 15234, Atlanta, GA) A re-release of old bastards like will recall from the first time this came out in the early 80s. They're back together and are enjoying themselves (I saw them open up for the even older Vibrators and Gang Green) This might be anachronistic and out of date, but its fun, full of energy and has all the classics "Don't Wanna Live," "Chaos" and "American." All that's missing is a Rock Hotel gig with GBH. - Tom Brebric

THE VEGAS NERVE - *Killjoys Anonymous* (Omniad Records 435 Hudson St. 5th Fl. New York, NY 10014) The Vegas Nerve, named for a nerve connecting the brain with the mind, plays dreamy hypnotic pop with ethereal guitar hooks and engaging vocals. The opening three tracks float from your stereo, particularly the beautiful "A Crack In The Ice" and the passionate "Fear of Drowning". The band is led and commanded by guitarist/vocalist David Gray and percussionist Tim Every. These two minds collide to generate experimental yet wildly catchy guitar that challenges the listener and features unexpected twists and turns, such as loops and bongos meshed together in a sprawling web of original and enchanting songs. This is a band that expresses their thoughts with clarity and rage lacking in most modern pop. This is not hum along jangle fluff. Instead, the Vegas Nerve create a brand of emo pop that should excite the masses of people searching for something off the traditional path. - Rich Quinlan

VERBENA - *Into The Pink* (Capitol) Down and dirty rock n' roll with pummeling bass and jagged guitar riffs and sleazy vocals. Southern fried grunge rock, produced by Mr. Dave Grohl. - Howie K.

VIC FIRECRACKER - *Mixed Not Mastered* (929 Massachusetts Ave. Suite 4F, Cambridge, MA 02139) Masterfully lingering in the gray between ethereal sadness and driving anger, Vic Firecracker works with both passive and aggressive emotions to create a vibe that confidently stands by itself. The guitars clash against each other to work together, one powering through chords, the other floating above with precision riffs. This, coupled with odd time signatures, is held together by the perfect use of dynamics. And there's nothing sexier than a boy who can whisper smart, sensitive lyrics, then issue sustained, throat-burning screams. Ahh, and they're from Boston?! My pick of the issue... - Kristin Forbes

VISIONSTAIN - *Me Flat* (Silverdish Records, POB 64718, Rochester, NY 14624) Seventeen off-beat, quirky sounding "indie" pop rock tunes. The songs are pretty generic and the vocals are too whiney. I did enjoy the rhythmic bass lines. - Denis Sheehan

WAXWING - *For Madmen Only* (Second Nature - POB 11543 Kansas City, MO 64138) I must admit that there are times when a deadline is approaching and I have a stack of CD's to get through. I don't give each record a "thorough" listen. I'll play the first few minutes of the track and if nothing grabs me I'll skip the next, playing less and less of each song until something sticks out. It's certainly a great way to determine a band's redundancy factor. For instance, every song on Waxwing's record is slow and wistful and then kicks in to full blown emo-esque rock about 30 seconds in. Some songs make it to a minute and a half; one even made it to the three minute mark. But every one follows the same pattern. There, you don't have to find out for yourself. - Sal Cannestra

WE RAGAZZI - *Suicide Sound System* (My Pal Records, PO Box 13335, Chicago, IL 60613) Raw, undiluted, old-fashioned rock and roll in the garage band tradition. There's an aggressive edge to the music, a snottiness to the vocals, but underneath the gruff exterior beats the heart of indie-pop purity. An excellent balance between the two is maintained throughout. Guitar, keyboards and drums are the featured instruments. Get this or be square. - Paul Silver

WESLEY WILLIS - *Greatest Hits Vol. 2* (Alternative Tentacles) Looking for a collection of truly bizarre spoken word "songs"? This is it. Wesley shoves his incredible, and often out of this world, poetry down your throat. The spoken word is recited with a band playing pretty cool jazz/rock music. At times, Wesley sings his words, but he is not a singer at all. This guy doesn't hold back on anything. His words will cut through you like a knife. "Frogs," "Amy," "Girls On Film" are more hard core (music wise) than the rest. Hey, there is even a tribute song to Jello Biafra. This CD is by far the most interesting and fun disc I have heard in a very long time. Check it out. - Denis Sheehan

THE WICKED FARLEYS - *Sustained Interest* (Big Top Records 955 Massachusetts Ave, Suite 115 Cambridge, MA 02139) Contrary to the implications, this release actually did very little to sustain my interest. Whiny vocals, and lots of fuzzy, out-of-tune musicianship yielded a very irritating listen. Art rock at its refuse. -Mike Ramek

WISEMASTER JOSHUA - *Inclement Weather Bus* (www.listen.to/wmjosu) Bristling with an incandescently blithesome blend of youthful pluckiness and ambition, this disarmingly sweet and upbeat 8 track album gets the nod on the basis of its infectiously jolly effervescence alone. This extremely young (the band members are 18 to 21 years old) Sparta, New Jersey pop-rock outfit don't wallow in the usual gloomy adolescent angst bullshit, preferring instead to take a more positive and uplifting view on life. While the music is bubbly, peppy, thrashy arrangements cut a lively, shimmering, dynamically kickin' groove, the band radiates a certain boyish appeal as they energetically dig into one ebullient song after another, coming up with an immensely likable and endearing effort that is for a very pleasant and invigorating listen. -Joe Wawrzyniak

WOLFPAK - *Somethin' Wicked This Way Comes* (Sugardaddy Productions, 997 Main St., Red Hill PA 18076) This is a horrid, almost incoherent words. It's another pathetic hip hop/metal hybrid that is so poorly executed, it makes the dolts in Limp Bizkit look like musical revolutionaries. Each song is either redundant, uninspired or completely inappropriate. Maybe these guys are just poking fun at themselves, in the vain of Insane Clown Posse. That's my hope, at least, for if they actually believe that their ode to necrophilia, "Death Becomes Her," featuring the poetic beauty of lines like "One man's trash is another man's lover" is either original or funny, they are sadly mistaken. The samples here are weak, the vocals flat and every song revolves around a repetitive drum-loop. The low point, and there are many, truly arrives when the boys attempt an updated version of the Digital Underground staple, "Humpty Dance." Stop it. - Rich Quinlan

WORTHLESS/S.O.V. - *Split 7-inch* (New Jack Records, 79 Deerfield Rd., East Brunswick NJ 08816) Worthless play energetic melodic hardcore with conviction that rings through on their two tracks, "You're Ass is Grass and Worthless" the "Lawnmower", and "Growing Up Normal". The enthusiastic sound that accompanies these two anthemic numbers reminded me of the OP IV's abrasive material. In contrast, S.O.V. rip through their four seething tracks of gritty crust punk with manic fervor reminiscent of the Unseen. Incredible stuff from two excellent East Coast bands. -Mike Ramek

THE WUNDER YEARS - "Take It Off, Let It Go, Start From Scratch" 7-inch (Tomato Head Records PO BOX 61298 Sunnyvale, CA 94008-1298) Catchy guitar hooks and thoughtful vocals combine to produce meaningful songs about betrayal, boredom, nostalgia, and hope. This singular pop punk release by The Wunder Years. Each song on the release stands apart from the next with its distinct melody and style, from the straight forward pop punk of "Backstab" to the anthemic sing-along style of "Bottled" to the jumpy, ska-tinged "Wunder Years". With memorable tunes, catchy vocals, and honest lyrics, you can't go wrong with this one. -Mike Ramek

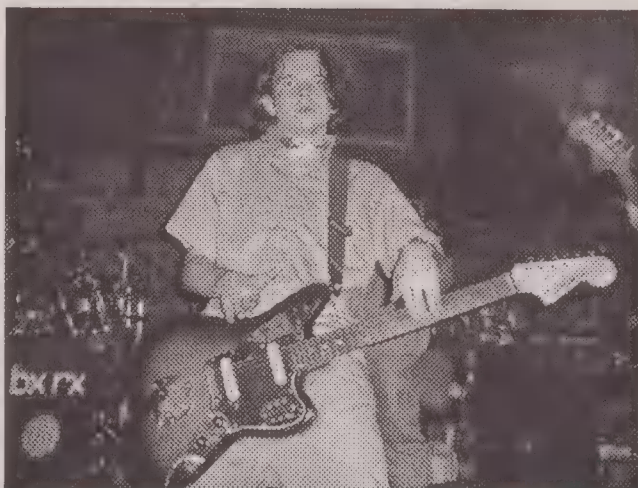
XBXR - *Love Songs For The Blind* (Anal Log Recordings, PO Box 3915, Terre Haute IN 47803) I have the future of rock 'n' roll, and you might not be able to spell or pronounce it, but believe me, the new millennium is in good hands. Xbxx, Alabama teens (and a couple of early 20-somethings), mix electronics, guitars, samples, garage, metal, punk, and a gonzo sense of humor in songs like "Appalachian Snake Charmer" (Man... Or Astronam? Goes postal),

"Carlos E. Moore" (X Ray Spex '99!), "Go Ape" (Dr. Zaius, call your service) and (my favorite) "Rock 'n' Roll Until You Drop Your Pants" (? The Mysterians, eat your hearts out!) A sonic assault that will tickle your ears and your funny bone at the same time. Trust me, your life will not be complete until you catch these kids live. - Jim Testa

YOKE SHIRE - *Masque of Shadows* (Zygo Records, PO Box 397, N. Chelmsford, MA, 01863) In a word, WOW! Yoke Shire is an enrapturing mix of classic acid rock and renaissance European folk music, complete with dulcimers and mandolins. While the music has unsettlingly strong Jethro Tull and Led Zeppelin influences, the complex and varied musical structure gives this album undeniable credibility as a work of art. The sophisticated musical structure is used to make half of the album purely instrumental. The roaring renaissance rock music and poetically surreal lyrics give the journey through this album a floating opiate dream quality that is guaranteed to entertain and relax a stressed out spirit. The album is also a concept album about a person journeying to discover mystical/occult wisdom. Yoke Shire will redefine your notion of what rock music can be. - Ron Cusamano

COMPILATIONS

BACK TO DONUT (No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville FL, 32604) 33 songs here with some of your classic shit songs that you expect on a comp. and a few rockin' ones. Lexingtons, Less Than Jake, One Eye Open, Tomorrow, and the Usuals are the stars of the disc. With No Idea, you really get something for everyone - emo, ska punk, punk, and hardcore - so no one has a problem not to drop the flow for this disc. - Conor



xbxx

Photo by Jim Testa

BEAUTY IN DARKNESS VOL.3 - (Nuclear Blast, P.O. Box 43618, Philadelphia, PA 19106). A 14-song compilation with styles ranging from gothic to black metal, and so on. Some bands featured here are Cradle of Filth, Moonspell, Anathema, and My Dying Bride. The CD begins very quietly with female vocalist Liv Kristine doing a duet of her song "3AM" with Nick Holmes of Paradise Lost (actually, it's a remix); anyway, it's very good. Moonspell contributes a live version of "Raven Claws" which was previously unreleased. Cradle of Filth blasts out a musical blasphemy with "Cruelty Brought The Orchids". There are a few surprise bands here that really impressed me like Crematory, and Dimmu Borgir. - Phil Pinto

THE BLASTING ROOM (Owned and Operated Recordings, PO Box 40 Fort Collins, Colorado 80522) UNBELIEVABLE; the only word needed to describe this comp. Twenty tracks of amazing music by some of Punk Rock's best known bands - as well as some not-so-well-known bands. This compilation is thematic in that all of the bands featured recorded at Bill Stevenson and Stephen Egerton's (of ALL/Descendents) recording studio in Colorado named The Blasting Room; it is even necessary to mention that the sound quality is of no comparison? More than half of the tracks on this CD are unreleased goodies from such bands as Lagwagon, ALL, Descendents, Hagfish, Shades Apart and others, while most of the others are from previous (or forthcoming) O&O releases. A good portion of the bands on this comp have that Descendents sound, which is a definite plus for me. As stated by Abe Brennan in the insert, "This is not college music. This is a punch in the mouth and a kick in the balls. This is a black eye to the face of pop music. Enjoy." - Rick Saporta

BUILT FOR SPEED: A MOTORHEAD TRIBUTE (Victory Records, 1837 W. Fulton, Chicago, IL 60612) Eleven bands cover Motorhead songs. The Dropkick Murphys (with Dicky Barrett of the Bosstones singing) cover "Rock And Roll." Groovie Ghoules do a Ramones-like version of "Ramones," and Speeddealer

a hardcore cover of "Motorhead." Other bands include Zeke, Chrome Locust, and Terra Firma. However, the best cover here is Electric Frankenstein's "We Are The Road Crew." Very fun even if you are not a fan of Motorhead. - Denis Sheehan

DECAMPITATED (Glue Factory Records, PO Box 404, Redondo Beach CA 90277) This is a soundtrack to what to be really cool movie (hopefully I can get my hands on it some day). The movie is about these teens who go camping and a murderer shows up (basic plot, I know, but trust me, I have the feeling the movie is really funny and good). Hardcore fans, turn up! H2O, Strife, Hatebreed, Sheer Terror, Strife along with 5 others deliver some pretty good hardcore. Send me the movie, Glue Factory! Pick up the disc, hardcore kids. - Conor Moore

DIGGING IT UP (Grub Records, 400 Park Rd., Parsippany NJ, 07054-1737) Twenty-nine GOOD bands doing either the thing, the punk thing or the hardcore thing. I'm sure you haven't heard too many of these bands but that's the best part, it's like getting up on X-mas and getting all new stuff, only here with sounds. Unleaded Plus, Cousin Oliver (yeah! I love these guys!), Mothermania, Face First, T.J.P., and Double Standard are just a few of the rockin' bands. Pop punk fans, ska fans, punk fans, hardcore fans, this is for you, yes, all of you! It's really really cheap too so no excuses! Check out the generation of great music. - Conor Moore

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED - Double Vinyl 12-inch LP (Tranquility Base Records, P. O. Box 184 Bryn Mawr, PA 19010) This double 12-inch compilation is complete with a bevy of unique and original bands, all displaying a range of intricate playing. All of the acts deliver tight, well articulated efforts, from the subdued precision of The Hourly Radio, to the well documented musical prowess of Don Cabellero. There are a few acts here, such as Smart Went Crazy, Ethel Meserve and The Drive In, which I am familiar with and expected brilliance from, and I am not disappointed. I was also pleasantly surprised with some of the beautiful chaos created by bands like Ke Chandra, Glorium, Nobuhjst, the wildly minimalist Shrink to Fit (whose song "Be Around" is recorded with two hand held tape recorders,) and Ed Matus' Struggle. Each band is worth checking out, for they all have the spirit of indie rock into fresh directions while holding true to its original aesthetic. Like Cordial is a perfect example of this. "Underwhelmed" is a sharp track driven by jagged guitar work and passionate vocals, or the spoken word style that drives Drill for Absentee's ethereal "Naked Singularity." Other notable contributions are courtesy of ChrisSteveRyan,

whose "To: Love and Honor" features warm saxophone beat, jazzy gem, and the bass-heavy throb and booze-infested hook of Systems Ltd.'s "Two On One Arm." This is a fabulous collection mixing bands of prominence and bands of promise. Find this. - Rich Quinlan

FASTER, PUSSY... ATTACK! TORA! TORA! TORA! (Howling Bull America, P.O. Box 40129, San Francisco, CA 94140-0129) A compilation of Japanese indie bands. The CD opens up with the band Yellow Machinegun, which is a chick band that's pretty pissed off, and pretty damn good! Amongst others worth checking here are Hellchild (like Pantera, but twice as fast!), Force (straight-up grindcore), and Nunchaku (the music is pretty heavy high-pitched yells, but all the words are in Japanese so that kinda killed it, but it's still pretty good). - Phil Pinto

HELL AIN'T A BAD PLACE -A Tribute To AC/DC (Reptilian Records,) My hell-raiser pal Mr. Chris X, of Reptilian Records and record store in Baltimore, Maryland, has always been what you could call a taste-maker. He's constantly checkin' out cool new bands before anybody else. He knows a lot of people, which is evident by this amazing compilation. The bands: SuperSuckers, Chrome Cranks, Electric Frankenstein, Dwarves, Lollipop, Zeke, REO Speedealer, Upper Crust, Fuckmos, Honky, Voltage, Chapstik Voltage. The Art work: Coop. Stand-outs for me were Upper Crust's hilarious rendition of "Big Balls" SuperSucker's version of "Rock Singer" and EF's re-do of "High Voltage". This compilation is a perfect antidote to any lame party. Stick it, push play and crank it to 11. Another great record from the ever-growing Reptilian Records Empire. - Howie K.

HOT CURLY WEENIE Vol.2 (Recess Records, PO BOX 1112, Torrance, CA 90505) A decent comp with an abrasive trashy punk flavor, featuring evil reckless white trash rock of the Quincy Punk and the Dwarves, plus some pretty good lo-fi fuzz rock by The Grumpies and the Jag. Furious George cranks out a couple mid-tempo vitriolic punk rock tracks that really didn't appeal to me all that much, and the F.Y.P numbers leave something to be desired, too. The Criminals spew forth some pretty enjoyable sludgy punk noise bile, very reminiscent of vocalist Jesse Luscious's previous incarnation, Blatz, while the Crumbs contribute to the melodic punk side of things with their by-the-numbers pop style. There aren't many standout tracks on this one, although I would deem very few tracks on this comp unlistenable. The track surprised me for the better the one by Pud, with great guitar work and some unusually catchy vocals on the Misfits-esque "Mamma Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To

DIESEL BOY



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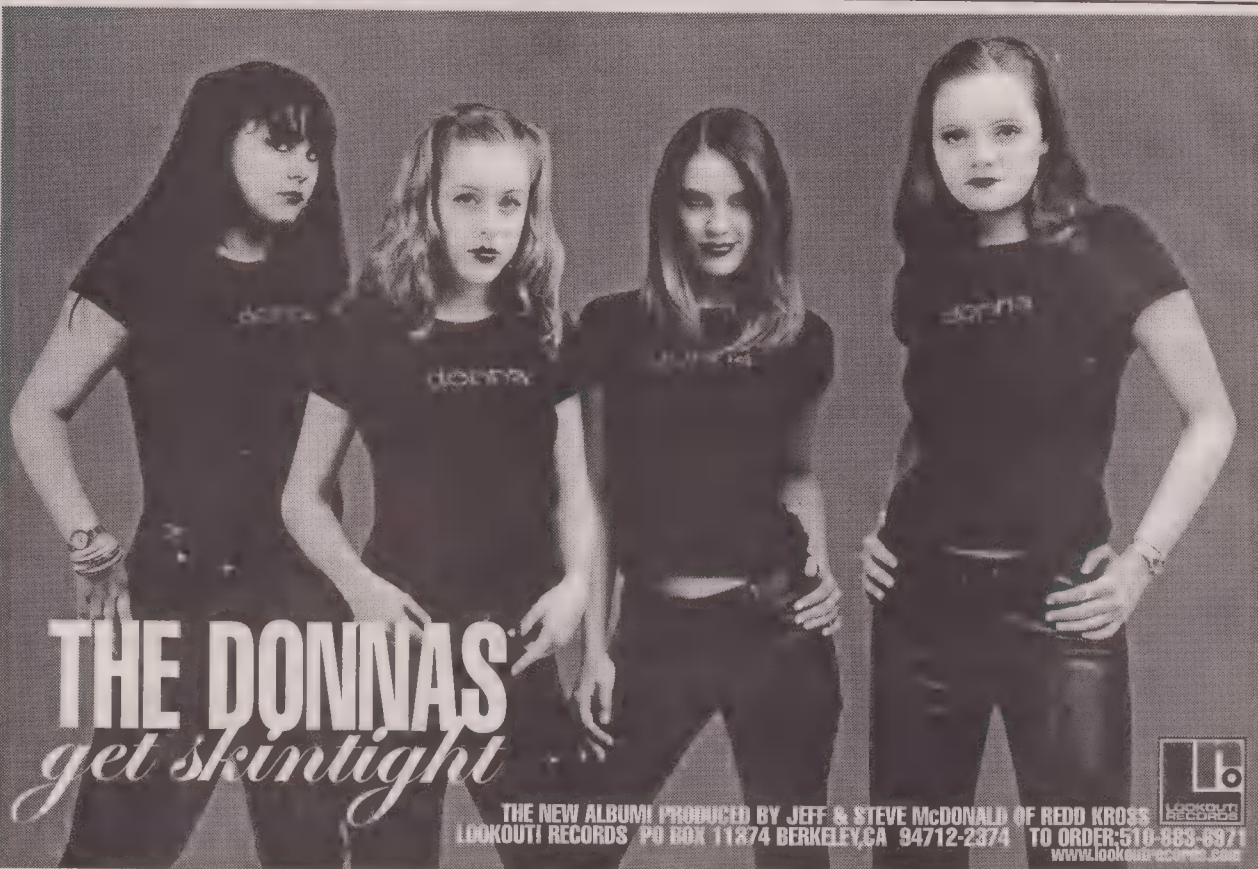
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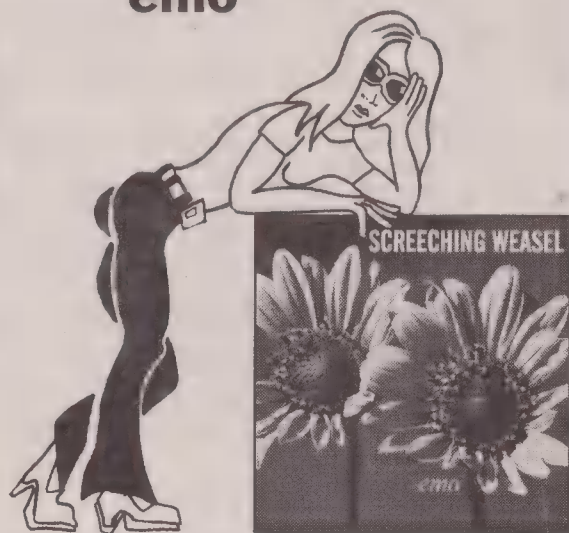
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Be Satan." The really appealing thing about this comp is the fact that much of its content consists of previously unreleased material from featured bands. I personally found many of the tracks pretty forgettable, though. - Mike Ramek

IN MY LIVING ROOM (Kimchee Records, 8 Sagamore Road, Ipswich, MA 01938) A nice, quiet, relaxing compilation of nice, quiet bands, including work from members of some well known acts such as Mary Timony of Helium. Ida's track, "Losing True," is particularly beautiful, complete with cat purring and other noises at the end. Timony's track is like a lot of recent Helium, loaded with synth in a good way. One of the biggest surprises on the disc came from a band called lo, otherwise known as Cordelia's Dad. Normally, they play all the kind of American folk/country/bluegrass music you've heard anywhere, but on this disc, in another guise, they serve up some really spooky sounding stuff worthy of an electrified Current 93. Cool, laid back comp. - Paul Silver

IN THE FAT LANE - Fat Music Volume IV (Fat Wreck Chords) Another Fat comp featuring some old rockin' bands along with some new ones. You know Fat so I'll only drop the names like Sick Of It All, Consumed, and The Ataris (their song is good, I'd buy the CD just to hear it!). So cheap you probably already own it and if you don't then you probably don't want it. - Conor Moore

INCOMPATIBLE, Vol. 2 (Victory) If your unfamiliar with the *Incompatible* CD's, here's what you get, all on one CD: a kick-ass compilation, a really cool CD-Rom 'zine with live videos and interviews with almost all of the bands, cool columns written by some heavy weights in the punk scene (band members, record label people, 'zine people) and interesting articles (this one's got Darren from Less Than Jake talking about Star Wars and Star Wars tattoos). So shut up and drop some on this? Ok... Ann Boretta, Anti-Flag, Grey Area, H2O, I Farm, The Judas Factor, Last Summer, and Saves Today to name a few. Wanna know what else is cool? It's very easy to use even for poor people with piece of shit computers like me! If you have a computer, even if you don't, you should have this! Once again Victory does me and proves why it's at the top of the heap of punk record labels. - Conor Moore

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH: The Emo Diaries, Chapter III (Deep Elm Records, PO Box 1965, New York, NY 10156) This is a comp with Multiple Personality Syndrome. Some of the songs on this disc certainly qualify to be called "emo." Some don't. Some of the bands are really just rocking indie bands. Some play genuine emo music, like Planes Mistaken for Stars. Their cut, "The Past Two," blends the middle-period screamed vocals-style emo with the poppier modern emo variety. Some stuff - like the band's "Cross My Heart" - sounds like fairly commercial alternative rock. Overall, though, the true emo outweighs the faux, yielding a decent comp. - Paul Silver

NOT SO QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT (Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141-9092) You're gonna buy a punk comp in the next six months, this one better be it. Back in print for the first time in a long, long while, this is a re-issue of the classic early '80s NorCal/Nevada hardcore punk from the days of bandanas, spiked cowboy boots, and giant sweaty circle pits from hell. With 47 songs clocking in at 74 minutes of ear-splitting pandemonium, you absolutely cannot go wrong with this one. From the second intensified Chaos screech through their venomous self-titled opening track, without regard for any stylistic speed limits, you know this compilation is gonna rock. The other tracks dress to impress - good ol' manic abrasiveness by the likes of Lady Wrestlers, M.A.D., Fang, Dead Kennedys, Ribsy, Square Cools, Unaware, 7 Seconds, Impatient Youth, Karmage, Domino Theory, Angst, Vengeance, UXB, and many others to mention. Hey, kids, do yourselves a big favor. Learn something about your punk rock heritage... pick this one up today! - Mike Ramek

THE PINBALL FAMILY AND DISTANT RELATIVES (Pinball Records) A rockin' comp. filled with 14 totally rockin' and pop punk bands. So how do I prove this comp. rocks? 10 of the bands are from NJ, and we all know that every band from NJ rocks. One Cool Guy, Nowhere Fast, Step Lively, LWL, Catch 22 and the Royalties make this a great pick up. Go ahead, pick it up, it really is a great comp. - Conor Moore

POST MARKED STAMPS (Tree Records Po Box 578582 Chicago IL 60657) This compilation is a labor of love for the folks at Tree Records. First, the liner notes tell of the painstaking effort put forth by all involved at Tree Records just to gather these songs. The tracks themselves revolve around the central themes of lost love and/or long distance love affairs. In the midst of all this agonizing are a handful of beautifully simple and sentimentally stirring songs. The collection runs the gamut from moody instrumentals like Cerberus Shoal's "A Lighthouse in Athens, Pt. I" to poetic loveliness of "Pincushion" from Rainer Maria and Jen Wood's "Sheltering Arms (For the Birds Yet Unborn)". The majority of the work here is built around reserved guitar playing and a lot of distress such as "Looks Like Tomorrow" from Still Life and "And Where Did I..." from the Deadwood Drive. Things get a little noisier with "Belated Blues", a driving track from Ethel Meserve, and A Minor Forest's "Inter Continental Stalker", an effort comprised of off-kilter guitar and intense drumming sprinkled with random samples and copious amounts of feedback. However, the tone of the disc is summed up by two of the most subdued, yet textually dense songs of the collection; Very Secretary's "Nagarkot" and "Post Prom Disorder" from Ida. Each of these songs tell their stories with grace and passion, allowing the power of their words to stimulate the listener more than any thunderous guitar crunch ever could. I loved this, and

despite all the struggle involved in getting this to the masses, I hope there will be more *Post Marked Stamps* in the future. - Rich Quinlan

SERIAL KILLER COMPILATION (Fearless Records, 13772 Goldenwest St. #545, Westminster CA 92683) Serial Killer, a company that puts out skateboards and some nifty t-shirts, presents a punk rock comp for your listening pleasure. The compilation opens on a good note with the Queens' "Tamara Is A Punk" off their new LP. Can't go wrong there. Zeke, REO Speedealer, and the Smut Peddlers rock the roof off with their brand of trashy gutter rock'n'roll, while the likes of Beefcake, Gob, Strung Out, 88 Fingers Louie, Jughead's Revenge, Diesel Boy, Rhythm Collision and Bigwig deliver the goods on the straightforward melodic punk side. I wasn't too crazy about the No Use For A Name/ Blink 182/ Bracket lightweight pop stuff, though. Overall, this is a well rounded comp that serves as a good sampler of some recently released rippin' tunes. - Mike Ramek

SHANTI PROJECT COLLECTION (Badman Recording Co., 1262 Page St. SF, CA 94117) A new comp featuring five great artists; a portion of the proceeds will go to the Shanti Project, which is dedicated to enhancing the lives of people living with HIV and AIDS. The comp includes San Francisco's Red House Painters, Low, Idaho, Canadian singer songwriter Hayden and Misc. Each artist contributes a couple of tracks each, which range in style from folk to shoegazer pop to ambient soundscapes. The booklet to the CD was designed by Paul McMennamin, whose work has graced Pixies and many other 4AD covers in the past. A great comp for a important cause. - Howie K.

SHORT MUSIC FOR SHORT PEOPLE (Fat Wreck Chords) Holy shit! This comp is crazy! 101 (don't clean your glasses, yes, 101!) bands all doing 30 second songs. Not just shitty bands either, huge bands like Blink-182, Green Day, Screeching Weasel, Rancid, Less Than Jake, Bouncing Souls, Offspring. Obviously, I could go on and on all day, but I won't bore ya, but I can bet that at least 5 of your favorite punk bands are on here. Go buy this, it's 101 bands, how can ya go wrong? Fat Mike (the dude who came up with the idea for this and put this together) for president! - Conor Moore

TAKE ACTION! (Sub City Records PO BOX 7495 Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495) A sharp melodic punk compilation put out as a benefit for the Foundation Fighting Blindness. Cough up four measly bucks, and you can sample the abrasively sweet energy of Scared Of Chaka, the relentless, incredible hook-laden brutality of Dillinger Four, the full-throttle oldschool hardcore of Kid Dynamite, and enveloping socially conscious melodic diatribes of Fifteen (plus a whole lot more). All sixteen tracks definitely rock, and the compilation exists for a good cause, so do yourself (and others) a favor, and be sure to pick this one up. - Mike Ramek

USE YOUR ILLUSION (Smilin' Bob Records, PO BOX 1002, Homewood, IL 60430-0002) An unusually eclectic punk rock compilation, the first release from Illinois-based Smilin' Bob Records opens with incredible horror punk by Muchacha, followed by straight ahead speed punk by Darkbuster, which gives way to the mid-tempo female-fronted pop punk of the Chubbies. Surprisingly for a 22 track comp, *Use Your Illusion* yields few lousy tracks. In addition to tracks mentioned previously, straight forward punk rock by Random 55, poppy punk by Mary Tyler Morphine, ear splitting hardcore by Gorgonzola, streetpunk-style rock by the Dillingers, punk rock antics by the Harmonics, and the pop hooks of Superleuth also be sampled on this comp. The most musically surprising track is in the form of the incredible fiddle playin' toe-tappin' Irish folk of the Tossers, whose track "Paper and Pins" has been perpetually stuck in my head since I first listened to it. Even your grandma can get into this song. Overall, *Use Your Illusion* is a strong compilation of up and coming Chicago-area bands. Definitely worth the measly seven bucks it costs to pick this one up. - Mike Ramek

WHERE IS MY MIND: A Tribute to the Pixies (Parenteau Guidance, 132 East 35th St., Suite 3J, New York, NY 10016-3892) Now here is a tribute album that makes sense. As the Nineties draw to a close, it is apparent and without dispute that the Pixies, a little band from Boston, defined a style adopted by a legion of imitators. The band created the sound of noise pop and acted as an inspiration for everyone from garage bands to the nation to Kurt Cobain himself. On *Where Is My Mind*, 15 skilled young acts offer mostly true-to-form renditions of Pixies classics. While every track here is recognized as a gem, a few stand out: Eve is a surprisingly competent version of "Allison" to kick the disc off. Far's interpretation of "Monkey Gone to Heaven" is the highlight here, with Superdrag's earnest adaptation of "Wave of Mutilation" being a close second. There are a few here that add their own unique spin on things, such as Reel Big Fish's take of "Gigantic" and Samiam's rousing "Here Comes Your Man." I was also impressed with a few of the less exposed songs that were included, such as Teen Hero's "Manta Ray" and Promise Ring's "Gouge Away." There is not a bad word to be said here. This is a must for all Pixies fans and appreciators of truly seminal acts. - Rich Quinlan

Books

MESSAGE by Henry Flesh (Akashic Books, PO Box 1456, NYC 10009) This latest novel from Johnny (GvsB) Temple's Akashic Press is yet another dark, kinky story about gay life in the shadow of AIDS. The twist here is that while AIDS figures heavily in the plot, the disease is never mentioned by name, just as "the sweetness." The story involves a rootless gay man eking out a living giving

erotic massages in the tawdry East Village of the mid-1990's, dealing with his inner demons (and the sexual abuse he suffered as a boy) while encountering a galaxy of perverts, junkies, transvestites, and hustlers, as well as an enigmatic once-famous writer slowly dying of AIDS. I found much of the relationships interesting but the inevitable downward spiral of the story and the protagonist too predictable, especially given the book's laundry list of negative gay stereotypes (all of whom turn out to be sex-obsessed, marginalized, and doomed.) - Jim Testa

MUSIC HOUND SWING! The Essential Album Guide - Edited by Steve Knopper (Invisible Ink Press) In Daniel Glass' (Royal Crown Revue) forward, he is in part, "Artie Shaw recently said the rather astute comment that swing is a verb, not an adjective. In other words, one shouldn't label 'swing music' as such, because any great piece of music... swings in its own fashion (from Bach to rockabilly)." That says it all about this book. It links the swing era, roughly 1935 to 1942, with the retro-swing bands of today, and their influences, including rockabilly (Robert Gordon, Lavay Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers, etc.) and the punk attitude that helped create the A. A huge A to Z guide of past (Louis Prima and Keely Smith, the Rat Pack, Frankie, Dino, and Sammy, etc.) and present (Cigar Store Indians, Crescent City Maulers-from NJ, Atomic Fireballs, etc.) bands. They include short, interesting bios on each artist and their albums. They also suggest what to avoid, as in bad reissues or new music that doesn't make the grade. For the audiophile they have listed LPs that are hard to find, but worth searching for. The book is full of facts, but it's laid out to be fun and interesting. - Phil Rainone

NO EFFING TITLE by Les Cammer (Amazing Experience Press, 1908 Keswick Lane, Concord, CA 94518) The second most important aspect of a book of poetry - outside of the poetry itself - is the font. Production of a book is the equivalent to the sound quality on an album, and *No Effing Title* uses one of the most boring, graphic designer-dreaded fonts out there. It's a shame, too, since the book is a beautiful perfect-bound with which Amazing Experience Press did a quality job. For the most important part of the book, I'm afraid to say the words themselves don't fair much better. Les Cammer does manage to put out a poignant observation here and there, but by and large *No Effing Title* is more as a series of journal entries than a book of poetry. This is to say such poetry doesn't have a place, but too often it falls short, relying on references to a "dr grid" or sometimes even leaving you wondering what the point of the poem is. Too frequently, there seemingly is no point. There is good poetry in here, but the collection would have been better off as a chapbook or broadside. For the most part, the guts of the small press and the form and intricacy of the academic press,

leaving you hoping that maybe it makes people laugh at open mics. - D. Michael McNamara

Video

FLOODED - "floodumentary" (VHS Video) (PO Box 405, Ridgewood NJ 07451, \$5) This homemade, 15-minute video includes some home-movie footage of the group Flooded (a male/female noise-rock duo from California) decorating their van and then setting off on tour, as well as live performances and a very low-budget "music video" for one of the group's songs. The music is jarringly harsh and noisy, especially the live performances, and they apparently made quite an impression on this tour. The group is on hiatus at the moment this video is the only chance you'll get to check out this interesting and unusual act for a while. - Jim T.

FUGAZI - Instrument (VHS Video) (Dischord, 3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington DC 20007) As with anything Fugazi creates, *Instrument* breaks the mold of what is standard and expected by the majority, be it video or album. Shot since the band's inception in 1987, *Instrument* follows Fugazi through its first ten years as a band. Instead of being allowed to film just the typical choreographed concert footage, Jem Cohen basically allowed to film anything at anytime over the last ten years. Everything from the band's first show, to Ian Guy being interviewed for a public television show is seen here. *Instrument* is an amalgamation of various types of filming, mixing, and editing. Though the band is often perceived as militant, ultra-political, and sternly serious, this film shows how misconceived these ideas are through their humorous and laid-back attitude. After watching the film you can clearly see how much time and effort was spent by Jem Cohen and the band members (who help cut the film with Jem.) A must for any fan of Fugazi and/or independent documentary film making. - Tom Minarchick

"release" (VHS Video) (Victory Records) This documentary by Brant Sersen mixes live footage of some of your favorite hardcore punk bands (Bouncing Souls, Bad Religion, Sick Of It All, Face to Face, Less Than Jake, and more) with "talking head" interviews of musicians, label people, and other scenesters, all based around the theme of trying to explain the appeal of hardcore shows over mainstream rock. The interviews drag things down a bit, and it doesn't help that some of them are badly dated (the Bouncing Souls were still on BYO when they were interviewed, and the camera spends a lot of time following around Yuppie, who haven't been a player in the NYHC scene in years.) But the video and sound quality can't be beat, and the high-energy live footage captures all the excitement of a moshpit without the bruises. - Jim Testa



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Fanzine reviews in this issue were written by **MF**, **Fournier (MF)**, **Ramek (MR)**, and **Jim Testa**.

ANGRY THOREAUAN #21 (PO BOX 3478, Hollywood CA 90078-3478, \$4) It's an easy thing to put out a fanzine with the sole purpose of shock value. A cursory glance of A.T. might make you think that's the intent....this is, after all, the 'pussy' issue. Thing is that Rev. Tin-Ear has the writing ability and staff to allow this stuff to transcend mere shock value. The articles about the Secret Service serve as a critique of the whole Clinton/Lewinsky thing and are fairly hilarious to boot. Always obnoxious and fun. - MF

BARRACUDA #4 (PO Box 291873, LA CA 90027. 4 full-sized pgs, \$5.00 ppd) I thought this was going to be a **Gearhead** knockoff on first look. There's more to it than that, though. Sure, there's the fonts and layouts that shout Retro Fifties. And the car articles and cheese-cake photos of Bettie Page wannabes, too. Amongst all that, though, there's some good writing on hangover cures, shaving, and deceased Chicago Tribune columnist Mike Royko, stuff I don't normally find in zines, and nicely put together at that. - MF

BITE ME! #15 (\$2.00 ppd. 6038 Hayes #1A LA, CA 90042) The record label issue. There are short little interviews with the folks that run, among others, Crank!, Fat Wreck Chords, and BYO. The short pieces offer some contrast to how differently things are done by labels that, in some cases, put out similar kinds of music. A few pages (instead of just one) are devoted to Brett Guerewitz, he of Epitaph records. Some show and record reviews follow. Very specific in focus, this issue, which is pretty cool and worked well. - MF

CHICKEN IS GOOD FOOD #2 (PO BOX 642634, San Francisco, CA 94164-2634, \$2) Good themes make good fanzines, and this issue, with its beauty theme, is no exception. There's fun pokes at bands' promo photos (Discount wearing the 'Gap For Kids' grunge line, etc.), old beauty ads and a lot of cool graphics on top of some band Mad Libs, columns and interviews. Easy and fun to read on top of straying from the beaten path. - MF

COOL BEANS! #8 AND #9 (\$5.95 each, 3181 Mission #113 San Francisco CA 94110) I have been reading this zine for a few issues now. I've always been impressed with the way Cool Beans' articles work with a loose, sorta genreal framework for each issue; yet, at the same time still provide a reader with a good assortment of stuff. These issues are no exceptions. Issue #8 is the traveling issue. Editor Matt talks about his bike tour down the West coast, Aaron Cometbus is 'Born to drive', Lee Renaldo hangs out in Morocco, fuck goes on tour, Cynthia Connolly photodocuments Bali....damn, man, there's so much here, and there's so much variety! Right on! Issue #9, labeled 'Uncool Beans' on the cover, deals with things that suck. Beanie babies, Matt and the wierd cab he's had, the evils and dangers of trainhopping, Pee's tour (less-than-capacity crowds, you know)....yeah. Nice layout and

graphics in each of these, too. Very highly recommended in both issues. (The high price is because each of these zines comes with a sampler CD, which, unfortunately, I can't review due to technical problems....the one for #8 has A Minor Forest and Rhythm Pigs, and #9 has Mudhoney, Pee and Eric Gaffney.) - MF

CRYING CLOWN #9 (PO BOX 263, Yarmouthport MA 02675-0263, \$2) This is a self-congratulatory anniversary issue celebrating five years of this zine, with a 'best of' retrospect and new stuff tossed in. So, we've got a few band interviews, reviews, and some fairly pedestrian poetry and fiction....there are markers indicating which articles, etc. were indeed 'best of' and which were new, saving me the trouble of trying to discern. Nice to see a small town in Massachusetts represented by a zine. - MF

DREEMY KREEM #1 (PO Box 6304, Hoboken NJ 01030, \$2) This is a collage-type mishmash zine, with a lot of different stuff thrown in seemingly at random. Cocktail recipes and snacks for same take up a bunch o' pages, and

that this zine isn't governed strictly by the conventional wisdom of what's 'punk' and therefore okay to discuss. - MF

FRACTURE #1 (PO BOX 623 Cardiff, CF3 9ZA Wales, UK, \$2) I've said it before, and probably will again: Fracture is an amazing piece of work, taking the template that *Maximum Rock N' Roll* popularized and making it vital again through just plain good writing. Columns = great, reviews = informed, interviews = make me want to check the bands out because the lines of questioning (and answering) are well thought out. It's nice to get a perspective from the other side of the pond, as it were, both in terms of the British scene and another view of what we have here in the States. This is quickly becoming one of my favorites..... - MF

GENERATION LATEX #7 (Marc Moscato 70 Victoria BVD. Kenmore NY 14217, \$1) Through his interviews, stories, observations and artwork, editor Marc makes the reader (okay, made me) cast a critical eye on the nature of 'art' and its movements and their



some essay-ish writing and fiction stuff take up what isn't taken up by cut n' paste graphics and Dame Darcy-ish handwriting. - MF

FLASHING ASTONISHER (PO BOX 70, Syracuse NY 13210-0070, \$2) A short note on form: with many full-sized newspaper zines plugging my mailbox, it's great to have a bunch of photocopied pages stapled together one on top of the other. Right on! Anyway, the **FLASHING** on these pages is bubbling over with enthusiasm and moves freely from topic to topic. Haikus about Syracuse (where you can find this zine for free), how to have productive band rehearsals, stories about lame jobs in sketchy neighborhoods.... not always technically adept, but forgivable because of the energy that is obvious on every page. Some band reviews (Fugazi, Mogwai) and a bunch of music, live band and zine reviews fill the back. Nice to see

validity. From TV performance art to video work to, well, fanzines....it's all discussed in a friendly and inviting manner. I don't often see zines like this one, which is a shame. - MF

GET USED TO IT KID #1 (Franco Ortega, 400 Paer Rd., Parsippany NJ 07054, \$1) So this is a first issue, yeah, and one of the standard first issue things are in effect here: the layout needs a bit of work and space isn't always utilized well. Having said that, though, I was impressed by the zine's content. These guys are going out of the way to cover bands that nobody's ever heard of before, both in terms of the interviews (Humble Beginnings and Got Milk?) and reviews presented. It's completely refreshing to read interviews with different bands instead of reading the fortieth consecutive interview with Avail or Converge or whoever. Lots of potential here. - MF

IN EFFECT#12 (PO BOX 710060, LaGuardia Airport Stn., Flushing NY 11371-0060, \$3.50) Another excellent in-depth look at the NYHC scene as a whole, printed on some nice newsprint with a cool glossy cover. Current news about the scene and bands is provided, as well as a plethora of hardcore album, demo, and 'zine reviews. The bulk of this issue, however, is devoted to upfront, excellently put together interviews with Underdog, Skarhead, Vision, Kill Your Idols, Grey Area, Compression, Hoods, and Advertencia. This issue also features coverage of Awkward Thought's European tour, an all-time NYHC top 20 album list, and some awesome vintage hardcore fliers. Definitely a must-have for anyone even remotely interested in New York Hardcore. - MR

MIDGET BREAKDANCING DIGEST (PO BOX 271, Hygeine CO 80533-0271, \$1) This zine is free in the Colorado area and is totally worth checking out. Cool layout that doesn't rely on cliché gives a good backdrop for interviews with Jimmy Eat World, Tanger, and the 'Andre The Giant Has A Posse' guy, as well as a few more less developed interviews with bands and fanzines. Good writing about how to start a zine, and reviews that are well-informed and really try to inform the reader about the music presented. - MF

MOTION SICKNESS #7 (\$2.00 PO Box 24277, St. Louis MO 63130) I was, and am, so impressed by this newsprint zine. Phil manages to provide really good band interviews (rare these days) and articles while managing, layout-wise, to avoid the clichéd layouts and fonts. This zine has a look all its own...simple and effective. I stoked on Phil's article about last year's More Than Music Fest in Columbus, and on his reflections on his age and how he interacts (or, sometimes doesn't) in the punk scene. It's nice to read something down to earth and earnest in the midst of reviews and bands, you know? No frills and more than a few steps ahead of the pack. - MF

THE NOISE # 189 (\$2.00. T. Maxwell, 74 Jamacia St. Jamacia Plain, MA 02130) I'm really biased, being a Boston kid. The Noise is a monthly free (in town) zine that interviews bands, reviews shows, demos, records and CD's. Did I mention the gossip column? It's fun. Anyway, The Noise is fairly varied in its scope, based on what the contributors decide to cover that month, so every issue has a different taste in terms of coverage. Some issues will find coverage of punk, some will do hardcore, then others will do pop and indie rock. This particular issue has features with the Peasants and Boy Wonder. - MF

POTPOURRI AND ROSES #6 (PO BOX 25962, LA, CA 90025, \$2) I really like that this zine is so broad in its coverage. There's Me First and The Gimme Gimmes on one page, followed by Punch the Clown, a ska band, and there's Beau Soliel, a zydeco/bluegrass band, and the Martinis, a lounge

band....yeah! Well-done interviews, and the review section follows suit in terms of both content and diversity. - MF

PSYCHO MOTO ZINE #11 (\$1.00 POB 20223 New York NY 10009) Hilarious. This is a whole zine dedicated to stupid jokes and urban legend-type stories sent in by friends and readers. Drugs, poo, zoophilia, Bushwick Bill's new legal name....everything that you need is right here. More like this one, please. - MF

QECE #9 (406 Main St. #3c Collegeville PA 19426, \$2.50) 'Question everything, Challenge everything.' This zine reminds me so much of when Bob Conrad was doing 'Second Guess' on a regular basis. So much hilarious skepticism, but skepticism with a point, as the title of the zine implies. Larry and his staff take shots (good ones, at that) at a whole lot of institutions, both of thought and of society. I wanna go off and mention all of the things, but it'd be far cooler if you checked this out yourself. Worth yr. cash, to be sure. - MF

QUICK DUMMIES #11 (cheap, 6810 Bellaire Ave. New Orleans, LA 70124) I really like half-sized newsprint zines. I thought this one was rad right away because of the size of the type...four-point, maybe. Every page is just packed with writing to the point where you might need a magnifying glass. This is punk rock with a big ol' 'p'....interviews with the Vapids and the Royal Pendletons, as well some really cool columns and yr. standard reviews. Robb's a good storyteller and loves doing this zine, and it really is reflected in the content. - MF

RATS IN THE HALLWAY#11 (PO BOX 7151, Boulder, CO 80306, \$2) Punk rock! Good writing abounds in this issue, including a strong reaction piece concerning the film *American History X*, an excellent article by 'Punk Pop' Christian Beansprout addressing the issue of a being a role model (applying the notion both to parental issues, and to those concerning the writing of 'zines or participation in punk bands, media that influence others), an amusing anti-straight-edge/anti cop rant by Philly Idol, and a short article addressing the worldwide plight of the blue collar worker. Also contained herein are interviews with Sloppy Seconds, 88 Fingers Louie, Floorpunch, and the Gamits, some album/zine reviews, and a harrowing true tale of a degenerate pro-wrestler-gone manic punk rocker by the name of Allen Wrench. Well done. - MR

SECOND NATURE #8 AND #9 (POB 11543 Kansas City MO 64138. 60-ish full-sized pages each, \$2 ppd each) The last hurrah here, in the form of what amounts to be a huge double issue. *Second Nature* has consistently delivered the goods for a while now, both in terms of the quality of the interviews, which are engaging and fun, (ready? Discount, Isis, Botch and Farewell Bend in #8, and Sharks Keep Moving, Jejune and Dillinger Escape Plan in #9) and layout. In these issues, the layouts are amazingly well done and avoid the tired desktop publishing formula that has made a lot of hardcore zines seem so derivative as of

late. Gorgeous covers, too (a little like Dave McKean of 'Sandman' 's work). Oh yeah, and columns and reviews, lots of 'em. Worth yr. cash and time, to be sure. Bye, guys. - MF

SKRATCH #37 (17300 17th St. Suite J# 223, Tustin CA 92780, \$2) Cool free-in-CA zine that covers big touting bands and locals. Very dense and informed. good use of a few different colors on the layout here, too. You know....local show and record reviews, pieces with the Subhmans and RX Bandits, among others. The kind of zine I'd like to check out between bands at some show. - MF

SOB STORY #1 / KUMQUAT #6 (PO Box 38272, Chicago IL 60613. 80 1/4 sized pages, \$2 ppd.) This zine is a perfect amalgamation of personal writing, punk rock, and skateboarding. I say 'this zine', even though it's a split, because the same dude, Andrew, did both sides. (*Sob Story* is kinda a re-launch of his old zine, *Kumquat*.) The *Sob Story* side is the thicker, with a section consisting of interviews with a bunch of folks whose lives were influenced by skating, and a short tour of Uptown Chicago. *Kumquat*'s half is great, too. The quarter-sized pages just add to the coziness of the whole affair...the size draws you in, and you can easily carry the zine around in yr. pocket. Rad! - MF

STAIN #16 (PO BOX 2501, Philadelphia PA 19147-2501, \$3.50) An excellently put together 'zine, with an awesome color cover, and some nifty graphics scattered throughout, focusing on a very eclectic range of topics, from urban biking mishaps, to an alleged scandal concerning the People's Republic of China and the US government, to an in depth true crime report on controversy concerning a triple homicide in Arkansas. Also contains microwave maintenance techniques, a Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds live review, and a bunch of indie/punk music reviews. A great read. - MR

STRAIGHT FORCE #4 (PO BOX 200069, Boston, MA 02120, \$2) I had never seen this one before. I like it a lot. Strong focus on Boston Hardcore, what with In My Eyes being interviewed (and interviewed in depth, and in such a way that if you don't like or know the band, it's still easy and fun to read) and really good local (to Boston) columnists like Al Quint. There's more than just the standard reviews/interviews/columns thing going on here, though. The personal writing/ranting is really well-done and entertaining, and the fiction holds up well, too. And did I mention that the reviews are fiercely opinionated but still well-informed? Damn, man. More, please. - MF

TOXIC FLYER #27 (Billy Whitfield, POB 39158 Baltimore MD 21212. 40 full-sized pgs, \$2 ppd.) I'm charmed, honestly, by the whole cut n' paste look of this zine. Punk rock, eh? But the interviews (Unseen, Raw Power, Apocalypse Hoboken, etc) are pretty boring and occasionally difficult to read, with all the misspellings and whatnot. Rounded out by obligatory show and record reviews (more than five records given six stars, denoting 'a true classic'). Next. - MF

Jersey Beat Back Issues

#51 (Spring/Summer 1994) **IS PUNK DEAD?** The Selling Of Punk: Green Day, Jawbox, Lawrence Livermore, Kurt Cobain obituary, Sinkhole

#52 (Fall/Winter 1994) **NEW BANDS ISSUE:** The Figgs, Deadguy, Bouncing Souls, Madball, Ex-Vegas, WOOL, Sound Advice, lots more

#53 (Winter 1995) **MAKING IT IN NEW YORK:** A Special Report on the special problems and challenges faced by bands in NYC - interviews with Quicksand, Jeff Buckley, Xanax 25, plus an in-depth interview with punk legend Mike Watt, plus local bands, reviews, photos, columns

#54 (Summer 1995) **THE DO-IT-YOURSELF ISSUE:** Tips on DIY projects like recording at home, putting on shows in your basement, running a DIY labels, & publishing a fanzine, including interviews with local notables who Do It Themselves; American Standard interview, NJ Hardcore Scene update, the usual reviews, photos, columns, and so on

#55 (Winter 1996) **THE OLD PUNKS ISSUE:** Into Another, Bill Stevenson of All, Keith Morris of Circle Jerks, Civ, Jawbreaker, Warp Tour photo essay, an old Freen Day interview, Urchins, Mars Needs Women,, and all the usual stuff.

#56 (Spring 1996) **ABC No Rio:** Behind The Scenes at the Scrungiest Punk Scene in America; interviews with ABC No Rio alumni including Hell No, Chisel, and an exclusive chat with Mike Bullshit; Melting Hopefuls, Resolve, Punk Tour Diary, SXSW Report, plus all that other crap.

#57 (Summer 1996) **The SUBURBIA Issue:** Weston, Trip 66, Kid With Man Head, plus Murphy's Law: The Jersey Beat Interview, Hoboken's illness, Footstone, and lots, lots more.

#58 (Fall 1996) **SCREECHING WEASEL:** All The Dirt on Ben Weasel vs. Larry Livermore and Lookout; Descendents; Killer Kowalski; Punk Rock Tour Diaries from Kid With Man Head, Tommie Griggz, and Thirsty; R.I.P. Donny The Punk; CMJ '96 Report; Our Man At Lollapalooza '96; Cycomotogoat, Anthrophobia, and Railroad Earth; and all the usual crap.

#59 (Spring '97) **SOLD OUT**

#60 (Summer '97) **SOLD OUT**

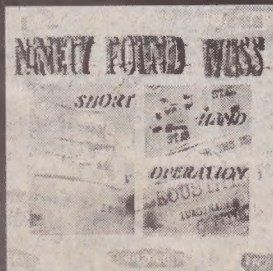
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#62 (Spring '98) **THE WRENS;** Sweet Diesel, Ropetree, Ben Weasel's TV Eye, NJ Scene Report; A fond look back at the history of Maxwell's; tons of reviews, and all the other good stuff.

#63 (Fall '98) **GIRLS AGAINST BOYS;** Bob Fields, L.E.S. Stitches, Pansy Division, Warped Tour, W.E. Festival, Ricanstruction, plus the usual shitload of reviews and stuff

#64 (Winter '99) **GENERATION Ex:** Old Faces, New Bands, with Jets To Brazil, New Rising Sons, Burning Airlines, The Jackie Papers; Electric Frankenstein, Ben Trovato, Against All Authority, Skarhead, Mearth,

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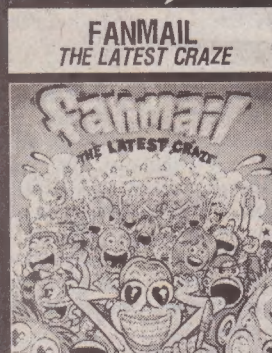
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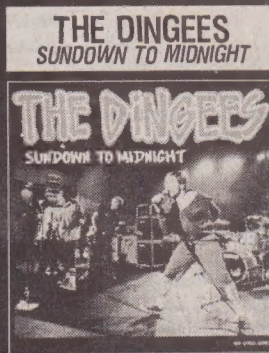


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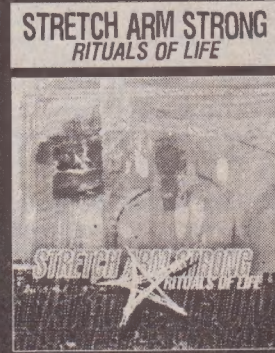
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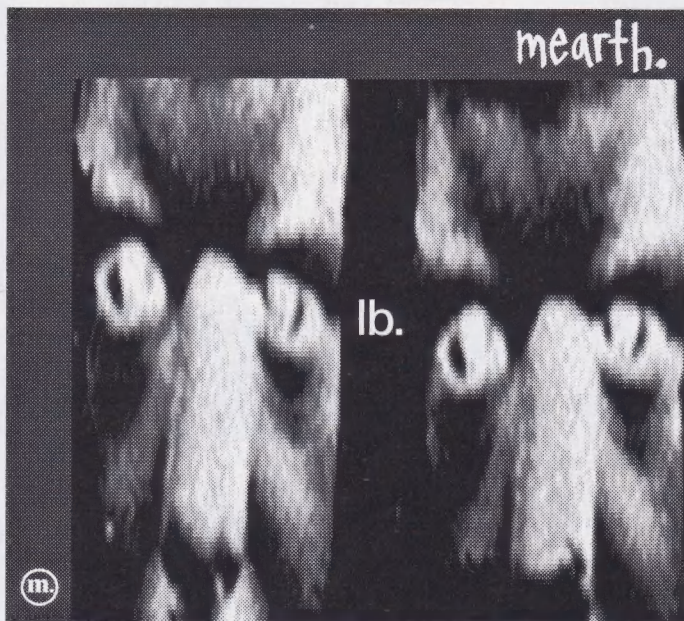


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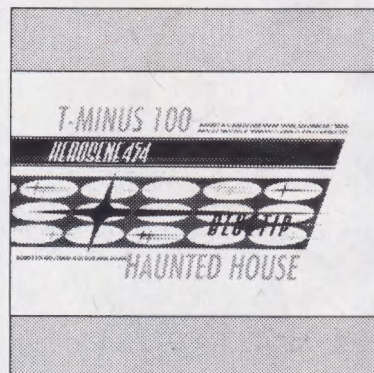
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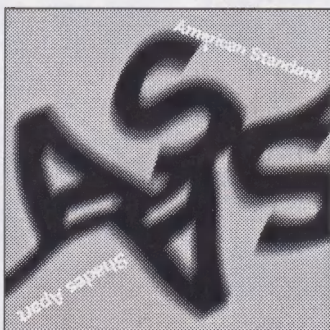


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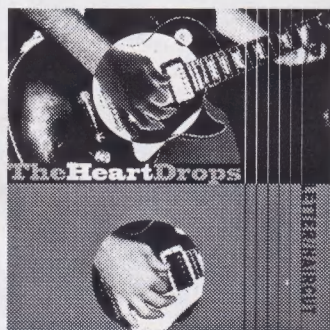
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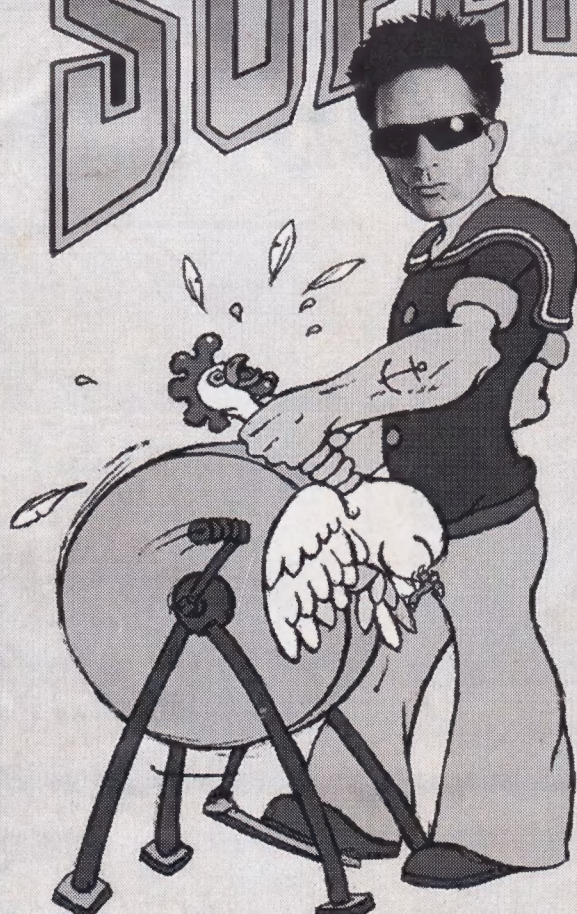
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